Monday, December 27, 2010 | 48 sections / Vol. 26 / No. 19 | P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alerts: Inq (8128) to 4467

High court rulings in 2 crime cases baffle rights group

By Leila B. Salaverria

A REGIONAL human rights commission said the Supreme Court of the Philippines did not apply jurisprudence equally in ruling on two well-known cases—the 1991 Vizconde massacre and the 1996 killing of former Col. Rolando Abadilla.

In a statement posted on its website, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) said there were "contradictions" in the high court's

MORE A14

ACROSS

Security lapse led to Jolo chapel blast, says PNP

ENTERTAINMENT

'Glee's' newest cast member proud of being half-Filipino

WORLD

Major winter storm barrels up US East Coast

This time, a whale shark error in bill

By Antonio Calipjo Go
Cebu Bureau

THE WHALE SHARK (Rhincodon typus), the biggest shark as well as the biggest fish in the ocean, is featured on

THIS A11

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

RED MARCH Young guerrillas march in front of a crowd during the celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines' 42nd founding anniversary in Surigao del Sur

DENR decries slays of forest workers

Illegal logging, mining blamed for rise in killings

By Kristine Alave

PHILIPPINE forests have become unsafe for the people working to protect them.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje recently expressed concern over the number of forest workers, whether volunteers or employed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), threatened, harassed and killed in the line of duty.

Paje attributed the rise in these acts of intimidation and downright murder to the government's revitalized campaign against illegal loggers, who, he said, had shown "sustained and recurring strength."

"It has become very hazardous nowadays to implement environment programs. And it's really hazardous to stay in the forests. But we cannot abandon our work," Paje said in an interview.

"Our people are sometimes afraid to do their work. They enter the forest with only a piece of paper, a voter smiles, but

DENR A11

CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN To the delight of spectators, members of the Grand China National Acrobatic Circus perform at Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Gov't, CPP optimistic on talks

ON THE 42ND founding anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), a government peace negotiator and a regional guerrilla spokesperson expressed optimism that Asia's longest running insurgency would end soon.

Promises by President Aquino to tackle poverty and corruption could boost upcoming peace talks with rebels and make the communist rebellion irrelevant, said Alexander Padilla, a member of the government peace panel.

Guerrillas of the New People's Army (NPA), which has endured decades of military crackdowns, celebrated the CPP anniversary yesterday in their jungle camps with a vow to intensify attacks.

GOV'T A11

Treasury told: Account for ₱64B in funds

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BUREAU of Treasury has come under fire for allegedly failing to account for at least P64.33 billion in government funds kept in over 400 accounts in state banks and accredited private banks, based on a Commission on Audit (COA) report in 2009.

"How much money are in the

TREASURY A14

'Piccolo,' 'kwitis' most dangerous firecrackers, health dep't warns

SMALL BUT TERRIBLE The "kwitis" (left) and "piccolo" are the top two causes of firecracker-related injuries.

By Jocelyn R. Uy

NEW YEAR revelers, beware.

The "piccolo" and "kwitis" may be small, cheap and colorful, but they are regarded by health authorities as the most dangerous firecrackers in the country.

In the run-up to the New Year festivities, the Department of Health (DOH) had so far monitored 117 firecracker-related injuries in the last five days across the country, with the piccolo and kwitis as the top two causes of accidents.

In its daily report that began on Dec. 22 as part of its "Kaligtasan Kontra Paputok," the DOH said Metro Manila had the highest number of injuries from

PICCOLO! A14

Ring experts, fans say no to Mosley

By Kate Pedroso
Inquirer Research

IF MANNY Pacquiao is surfing the Web, he just might want to duck for cover.

Criticisms of the Filipino boxing king's May 7 fight with 39-year-old American Shane Mosley are rising like a tsunami on the Internet, with ring experts and fans alike denouncing it as a slap on boxing.

Some fans urged Pacquiao to pick another opponent while one Facebook user launched a page calling for a boycott of the fight.

The attacks were triggered by Top Rank promoter Bob Arum's announcement earlier this month that boxing's best

SMAG A14

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Partly cloudy to cloudy with scattered rains and isolated thunderstorms

Metro Manila	Mostly Cloudy	Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy
Baguio	Mostly Cloudy	Tagaytay	Mostly Cloudy
Pagudpud	Mostly Cloudy	Iloilo	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Mostly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu, Bacolod	Mostly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legaspi	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Virac	Mostly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

6/42 Swertres: 21 11 26 12 4 18
Swertres: 0 5 1 9 7 5
2 D 2
Super Lotto 6/49: 14 18 22 40 43 45
P37,003,392.00
LOTTO 7/49 Next DRAW LOTTO, result for WED. P1.95 [illegible]

Aquino signs P1.6-T budget today

Noynoy's biggest challenge: To make P21-B dole work

By TJ Burgonio

WITH THE P21-billion conditional cash transfer (CCT) intact in the 2011 national budget, President Aquino's biggest challenge to make it work and prove critics wrong, lawmakers said.

The Senate and House of Representatives have set up mechanisms to avoid some of the hitch, and clear the only sector of business left wary in implement is efficient.

By Zarate Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya said.

"I feel confident that the President can get out of his way to show that this is a successful program," the chair of the House appropriations committee said in an interview.

President Aquino is set to sign this week the 1,645-trillion 2011 budget, which hewed closely to his National Expenditure Program and included big dollar items such as the CCT.

Under fire

The lump sum has come under the fire lawmakers who wanted that this was too much for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to handle, and claimed was vulnerable to graft. But Aquino's allies succeeded at keeping this intact.

The CCT, modeled after Latin America's cash transfer program for the poor, is targeting to benefit 2.3 million indigent families by the end of next year, more than double the 1 million beneficiaries this year.

The centerpiece of the administration's poverty alleviation program, the CCT gives away a maximum of P1,400 to a family every month on the condition that the children regularly attend classes, and mothers undergo regular checkups.

Zambales Rep. Mitos Magsaysay, a member of the minority bloc, agreed that the biggest challenge facing Mr. Aquino and the DSWD was to prove critics wrong that the CCT would work as they had envisioned it.

While an oversight committee and an inter-agency committee had been set up to monitor fund use and prevent leakages, she pointed out that rules of implementation have yet to be drawn up.

Doubtful safeguards

"No rules of implementation were placed or have been discussed. So I doubt if safeguards or its implementation will be done," said Magsaysay, who had questioned the bicameral conference committee's removal of a provision realigning savings from CCT for health and education.

"Proving the critics wrong as far as CCT is concerned will be P-Noy and the DSWD's biggest challenge as we doubt that it will be implemented properly and effectively," she added.

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Aquino is expected to sign today the first national budget under his six-month-old administration, but there are about 13 items in the P1.645-trillion "reform" budget that have been recommended for veto.

Budget Secretary Florencio Abad made it clear yesterday that these items are not appropriations but special or general provisions that he said tend to intrude on the prerogative of the executive branch to implement the budget program.

Abad said budget officials made these recommendations to restore the clear separation of powers between the executive and legislature and "that way attempt to intrude will be corrected so that there will be no erosion of powers of any branch [of government]."

"We are hoping the President would accept them all," Abad told the reporters.

Ahead of target

Although it's a holiday today, President Aquino will sign the budget in Malacañang in the presence of Abad, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Speaker Jose Belmonte and other lawmakers.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte said that the Palace was glad the signing of the budget would be held earlier than the target date of Dec. 30.

Valte said that the early signing of the budget will allow the early release of funds and the implementation of key roads-related infrastructure projects.

In a separate phone interview, Abad said that budget officials presented their veto recommendations to the Chief Executive before Christmas and that Mr. Aquino was reviewing them. He also said he had informed the Senate and the House on the DBM's "interventions" over these provisions.

Abad said his office recommended the veto of the provision which put a cap on the government's borrowings or indebtedness at the level of 53 percent of the growth's domestic products.

Not practical

"[The cap] is not practical and ties the hands of the executive," he said. Abad said it was the prerogative of the executive "to manage its liabilities," noting that the role of legislative was to set priorities and not implement the budget.

The cap will also not allow the government to take advantage of the present environment. That is, a regime where the peso is strong against the dollar and low interest rates, which Abad said was "conducive to managing your liabilities."

The budget secretary said the cap was recommended by "debt repudiation advocates" to Congress.

Also recommended for veto were "provisions that will require the executive to consult first with the legislature in the implementation of certain projects," said Abad.

'Very minor' vetoes

He said the other items recommended for veto were "very minor."

"No expense item was removed or decreased," he said, noting that the President's budget proposal was approved intact by Congress.

Abad, meanwhile, said the Aquino administration was now coming up with a budget execution plan, the first time for implementation in government.

This will allow the government to monitor the budget on a monthly and quarterly basis as well as set targets and find out how much there's left to do, he said.

In a statement he also issued, Abad said the DBM has been holding meetings with six departments with key infrastructure projects or social protection programs. These include the Departments of Public Works and Highways, Transportation and Communications, Agriculture, Education, Health, and Social Welfare and Development.

"The budget execution strategy, once approved by the President, will set the priorities, objectives and key policies in the implementation of the 2011 [national budget]. It will allow us to frontload and accelerate spending on critical programs and projects that foster economic growth and improve the lives of the poor," he said.

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Solon to be charged with LPG fraud

By Marlon Ramos

THE SUPREME Court has approved the filing of criminal cases against Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers' Association (LPGMA) party-list Rep. Jerry Ty for the violation of two Magnaye rules on petroleum trading.

In a resolution, the high court struck down the petition of Ty and four members of the board of directors of Unioil Gas Corp. (UGC) seeking to nullify the case filed against them by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in 2009 for unauthorized refilling and "underfilling" of LPG tanks.

Reviewing the separate resolutions of the Department of Justice and the Court of Appeals on the case, the magistrates ruled that they were "not persuaded" by Ty or all 5 out of 7 retained respondents" in their claim of innocence.

"Navigating considered, in the backdrop of the quantum of evidence required to support a finding of probable cause, we agree... that there exists probable cause for the violation of [the Issue]," the tribunal's First Division said in its Dec. 15 resolution.

It added: "After all, probable cause need not be based on clear and convincing evidence of guilt, as the investigation after entry requires reasonable belief."

The decision was penned by Associate Presiding Justice A., with Chief Justice Renato Corona and Associate Justices Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Mariano del Castillo and Jose Perez concurring in.

The case originated from the complaint filed by the lawyers of Shellane Dealers Association Inc., Petron Dealers Dealers Association Inc. and Tondaw Dealers Association Inc. with the NBI on March 22, 2004, accusing UGC of illegally refilling their LPG tanks.

Acting on the complaint, NBI agent Marvin de Jesus led a raid on a gasoline station in Pasig City.

After having been notified, de Jesus found out that one of the respondents was weighed less than the average LPG tanks, indicating that UGC could be engaged in underfilling of LPG tanks.

The NBI then conducted a raid on UGC's warehouse and subsequently filed a case for violation of Batas Pambansa Blg. 33, which penalizes misdelivered refilling of LPG tanks, as amended by by Presidential Decree 1865.

On Nov. 7, 2005, then Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño approved the resolution of Manila Jail assistant City Prosecutor Leandro Catalo finding probable cause to charge Ty et al.

Natural respondents in the case were Ty as UGC president and Marie Antonette Ty, Jason Ong, Willy Ty and Alvin Ty as members of the company's board of directors.

Where they failed to obtain a reversal of Catalo's resolution, the respondents sought reprieve from the Office of the Justice Secretary which ruled the case filed by De Jesus.

Determined to continue the case, the NBI official went to the Court of Appeals which affirmed Catalo's finding of probable cause in its decision dated Sept. 28, 2007.

A year later, the appellate court junked the motion for reconsideration filed by Ty and his cosurvived, prompting them to seek a judicial review from the high court.

Lawsuit unfounded —Samsung

By Marlon Ramos

KOREAN TECHNOLOGY giant Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp. has brushed aside allegations that it had unlawfully hired some 500 workers of a local staffing agency in formerly contracted to provide marketing personnel to its stores nationwide.

Dismissing the lawsuit as unfounded, Samsung lawyer Elmer Ocfemia said the case filed by Teresa and Godfrey Inc. (TSG) at the Department of Justice (DOJ) against the Korean firm's executives was an attempt to compel the electronics company to renew its contract with TSG.

In a news briefing, Ocfemia refuted TSG's allegations that Samsung had "pressured" its clients to hire workers by persuading them to join SO Humanresh, a human-resource management agency which TSG claimed was just a dummy for Samsung.

"When TSG contract with Samsung ended, the workers' contract with TSG also ended. So there is no privity to talk about," the lawyer argued.

Not true

"There is no truth to the allegations. Samsung is not in the business of manpower provision. We're not a service provider," Chapo Reyno-Sze, Samsung corporate membership director, said.

According to Ocfemia, TSG became "unreasonable, short of hysterical" when they learned that Samsung was not inclined to renew its contract with the manpower agency.

Ten and the case and the local department order issued against Samsung executives did not affect the operations of the Korean multinational.

"In fact, we are poised to make more investments in 2011," she said.

In its complaint at the DOJ, TSG accused Samsung of committing "large scale illegal recruitment, economic sabotage, theft and estafa" for "soliciting" it of its personnel.

Meanwhile, TSG lawyer Bertrand Ramirez asked Justice Secretary Leila de Lima to withdraw the departure permit issued to Samsung president and chief executive officer Kyung Chull Park.

Park, who was initially barred from leaving the country because of the case, was allowed to go to Seoul, South Korea, Dec. 12 to 19 before the United States from Jan. 5 to 12 next year.

"Taking into account the fact that it was not clearly established that there is an 'exceptional reason' why a travel permit] should be issued in favor of Mr. Park... we are respectfully requesting [the honorable office to recall the [order]," Ramirez said.

Help sought for ailing runaway maid

By Jerome Aning

AN OFFICIALS Filipina workers (OFW) group in Saudi Arabia yesterday renewed its appeal for the immediate repatriation, on humanitarian grounds, of a 70-year-old grandmother (Lourdes) OFW who has been in the kingdom for more than two decades.

The OFW from San Domingo, a widow and father of Sta. Cruz, Manila, faces possible deportation if caught by immigration authorities because of her being a runaway and for being undocumented, according to the Kapatiran sa Gitnang Silangan (KGS).

Rita Domingo could not also seek medical treatment from a hospital because she might get arrested for being an illegal alien.

Rita Jacosa, KGS chair, said his group has repeatedly called on the Philippine Embassy, the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (Polo) and Philippine Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) to provide assistance to the Domingo.

"Until now, there is no assistance given to the sick OFW who is already a senior citizen," Jacosa said in a statement released by the Migrante Middle East, an alliance of OFW groups in the region which includes KGS.

Jacosa said he was able to talk last week to labor attaché Albert Relativo regarding the case and the official promised that Sec. Domingo will be given immediate assistance.

In 1984, San Domingo went to Saudi Arabia and worked as a domestic helper but after years of employment, she ran away in 2000 and became an undocumented migrant.

Dr. Dr. 17 the post, Migrante Middle region coordinator Abu Jamad Matamama, who is based in Riyadh, sent an e-mail to Philippine authorities exhorting Sec. Domingo's case and requesting for humanitarian repatriation as she has been sick for some time.

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Zobic	[illegible]	[illegible]	P449
Ocean Park	[illegible]	9:00 PM	P595
Ocean Park	[illegible]	[illegible]	P349

VP eyes travel to MidEast

SAUDI ARABIA and other Middle East countries considering removing Filipino workers (OFWs) are on the priority destinations of Vice President Jejomar C. Binay in his foreign trips in 2011.

Binay said he will stop these trips in his capacity as Presidential Adviser on OFW Concerns.

And the President-Aquino, Binay does not plan to bring large delegations.

The Vice President plans to "hold dialogues and consultations with OFW communities abroad," Binay's spokesperson Rizalito Allices point-day told the Inquirer.

In a statement, Binay said he would like to "hear from our OFWs directly about their concerns and issues so that our government will always put priority on their welfare."

Last month, Binay joined the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Labor and Employment and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration in bringing home a total of 761 Filipino OFWs from Lebanon.

Earlier, Binay flew to South Korea where he held a dialogue with OFWs in Seoul.

— Jerry E. Esplanada

Anti-RH drive is Church terrorism–Lagman

By TJ Burgonio

THE CHIEF proponent of the reproductive health (RH) bill in the House of Representatives yesterday tasked Bishop Nereo Odchimar for equating the measure with violence.

"It is the height of unwholesome hyperbole," Minority leader Edcel Lagman of Odchimar's remarks.

Lagman said the RH bill was the least being "terrorist" because it sought to reduce the incidence of abortion and maternal and infant mortality rates; it welcomed the "wanted and properly-timed birth of children."

"The love and responsible determination by parents of the number and spacing of their children can never be considered terrorism," he said in a statement.

Odchimar, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, warned that approval of the bill would turn the words into a "torturous threat" to the unborn child.

He likened the measure to extra-judicial killings, insurgency and terrorism.

It's the latest salvo in the word war between proponents of the bill and Church officials over the controversial measure that is naively endorsed by President Aquino and predicted to be passed by June next year.

The bill mandates the State to offer natural and modern artificial methods to enable couples to plan the number and spacing of their children. It has been fiercely opposed by the Church for advocating "abortifacients."

After beating the arguments of pro- and anti-RH groups, the House committee on population and family relations ceased to mid-December a technical working group to consolidate all RH bills.

Lagman, author of RH bill No. 96, attributed the Church's devotion of the RH bill to its own history of persecution.

"The history of Christianity is so engulfed in terrorism from the persecution of early Christians to the constant persecution of both heretics and believers in preserve the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church particularly during the Inquisitions, that any development or personal values does not comply more Church concerns is condemned as hitched 'terrorism' like the RH bills," he said.

Those "acts of Church terrorism" catalogued to the Philippines where Spaniards colonized the country and are "perpetuated today with threats of excommunication against perceived religious dissenters like RH and pro-women advocates," he added.

The lawmaker clarified that both modern and natural methods such as rhythm and the Billings method, all aim to prevent pregnancy or conception, hence the term "contraception."

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Across the NATION

Security lapse led to Jolo blast–PNP

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A security lapse led to the bombing of a chapel in Jolo, Sulu, on Christmas day, the police in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) admitted.

At least 11 people were wounded when a bomb exploded on the ceiling of the Sacred Heart chapel, which is inside a police compound, while a Mass was being celebrated on Saturday morning.

"Apparently, there were lapses," Chief Supt. Skeeverdale Lang, ARMM police director, said.

"Investigation is going on, both the Philippine Marines and the PNP (Philippine National Police), including Special Action Force personnel, those who were posted on duty that day will be made accountable for this explosion," Lang told the Inquirer by phone.

Two days before the blast, Lang said, police received an intelligence report that was coursed through the Regional Intelligence Unit in Camp Crame and this information was passed on to the Provincial Police Office in Sulu but it seems that the information was not taken seriously," he said.

The threat was intercepted through a text message.

"Although security actions were made, they all conversed-ed on securing the Cathedral," Lang added.

Those found accountable for the security lapses will face administrative sanctions, he said.

But it was not clear when the charges came from.

"We don't have the final assessment culled out from the personnel pieces of evidences, we cannot just easily declare it's a handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf Group," he said.

Lt. Col. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, also denied reports saying he blamed the Abu Sayyaf for the blast.

"The post-blast investigation is still being conducted by the police. Besides we need to ascertain if there are members which past incidents where the perpetrators were identified," Cabangbang said.

Even Fr. Romeo Villanueva, one of the priests in the ransacked Mass, would not say the Abu Sayyaf was behind it.

"We don't have hands right now so this is still under investigation," he said.

Villanueva said he was reading the gospel of Saint John when the explosion happened.

"I was stunned upon seeing everyone going down. Father (Rodel) Bacaldo was in charge with the homily then," Villanueva said, admitting that he now has a hearing problem.

"I need to see a doctor," he said.

The Catholic Church in Sulu yesterday expressed grief over the bombing, saying it has done nothing wrong against those behind the explosion.

Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo Bishop Angelito Lampon said Christians and Muslims in the area were living in harmony but there could be some who may be incensed by the Church's charity work for its Muslim neighbors.

"There are a few salvage views are very fundamental and do not understand what we do, which is actually to help," said Lampon over the Church-run Radio Veritas.

Lampon said the Church has fed the building of some 3,000 homes and a number of schools for its Muslim neighbors. Two days before Christmas, the Church also spearheaded a gift-giving program to disabled Muslims.

"We do this because we want to help ... but some may deem these actions as an insult," said Lampon. "I think for them these may be a sign of permanency of the Christian presence," he pointed out.

Ninety-seven percent of the residents in Jolo are Muslim, he pointed out.

"It is saddening that it has to happen on Christmas Day ... we have done them no wrong," added the bishop. Julie S. Alipala, *Inquirer Mindanao*; Jerahmeel B. Uy in Manila

FR. ROMEO VILLANUEVA surveys the damage of a Catholic chapel following an explosion during a Christmas Day mass in Jolo, Sulu. A bomb exploded during the Mass on the chapel inside a police camp, wounding a priest and 10 churchgoers. AP

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT
A boy peers on a small "belen" outside the parking lot of a chicken grilling store in Talamban, Cebu City. TOTO LOZANO/PDI

Cagayan typhoon victims share food on Christmas

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Typhoon-ravaged victims shared their Christmas meal with neighbors. Many of them families still suffer from power outages due to damaged power lines that have not been restored. Some still live in damaged houses and had nothing prepared for Christmas.

"We just took the food given by my neighbor as we have no rice food to prepare for Christmas," Mildred Pascua, 32, said.

At least 30 percent of villages in northern Isabela still have no power, after their neighborhoods were ravaged by Supertyphoon Juan" in October.

Dietrician had its casualties, too.

Six people were hospitalized for food poisoning in Barangay Salamague, Iguig, Cagayan on Christmas Eve, police said.

Joselito Ramos, 19, her sister Kyle, 9, cousins Jasmin, 8, and Jimmy, 3, their aunt, Soledad Ramos, 54, and their visitor, Jerry Bagtas, 33, spent Christmas at the Cagayan Valley Medical Center.

Jocelyn Ramos, mother of Jimmy and Jasmin, said her children complained of abdominal pain, severe diarrhea and headache an hour after eating pork adobo, boiled eggs and sweetened langhe (jackfruit).

In Barangay Capitanjo in Gattaran town in Cagayan, Honorio Alcapilo, 58, was hospitalized for food poisoning.

Gilbarto Mangyan Jr., *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

NEWSBRIEFS

ZAMBOANGA CITY

Trader freed

MORE THAN six days in captivity, a trader was freed by her abductors, suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits in Lantawan, Basilan, on Christmas day.

Basilan Vice Gov. Al Rashead Sakkalahi said Rosalinda Baricuatro, 53, who was taken on Dec. 21 in Tipo-tipo town, was "recovered" at around 7 p.m. in Barangay Magkawa in Albuhan town.

"She was handed by my nephew Mujib Sakkalahi after he got a report from the community about a woman hunchback could not walk and was crying for help," Sakkalahi said.

Sakkalahi said not a single centavo was paid for Baricuatro freedom.

"The old woman was abandoned when she failed to keep up with the captors who were on the run while maneuvering from one place to another," Sakkalahi said.

Upon seeing the mother, Mitch said he cried because "she got on the wrong foot, her life could go on more now." Julie S. Alipala, *Inquirer Mindanao*

CAGAYAN

2 fires after Christmas

FIRE GUTTED one home store and an apartment room on Sunday (Dec. 26), a day after Christmas.

Firemen said faulty wiring could have started the fire at Uy's Hardware and Construction Supply and Barrio's Merchandise at 2 a.m. in Barangay Estefanagui here.

It took four hours for the volunteers of the Regional Philippine Chinese Chamber of Commerce and firemen from Cauayan City, Reppublan, Aurora, and this town to put out the blaze.

Vilma Cagurat, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ILAGAN CITY

Ex-mayor dies

FORMER MARANDING Mayor Alice Marahorn Bastian succumbed to a lingering liver ailment and died around 2 a.m. on Sunday (12 Calpajan) de Ore hospital.

Ramundo Marahornbe, a relative, said Bastian, 65, a lawyer, was cited in the book "Dwellers of this Lake," as among "the notable Ilibanians."

Survivors survived by eight children.

Ryan D. Rosario, Inquirer Bikolnon

THE NEW Calapan City Public Market has an elevator and escalator.

ORIENTAL MINDORO

Modern market opens

THE MULTI-MILLION-PESO municipal market in the Mimaropa or Region IV-B opened here on Dec. 15, with President Aquino in power.

Mr. Aquino said he was impressed with what the Calapeños had achieved and assured them of his support.

City Mayor Paulino Leachon, also the vice chair of the League of Cities of the Philippines, said the city government obtained a P-181-million loan for the new market after the old market was razed in 2008.

He said the loan is payable in 12 years.

Antonio Nava, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Albay evacuates landslide-prone residents

LEGAZPI CITY—The weather bureau has now placed Albay under any typhoon signal but the Albay Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council (PDCC) on Friday adopted measures for a big and Sto. 3 cannot because of continuous heavy rains that started on Thursday.

The Albay PDCC on Friday ordered the mandatory evacuation of more than 3,000 people in 22 landslide-prone barangays in Daraga to move to permanent relocation sites.

"The convergence of the tail-end of the cold front and easterlies (enhanced) in a big mass of cloud bringing continuous accumulated rainfall of 150-65 mm as of 5 p.m. today, said Albay PDCC chair and Gov. Joey Salceda said in an emergency meeting on Friday evening.

Predicting that the weather condition would prevail in the next 12 hours, he advised all city/municipal/barangay disaster risk reduction and management councils (DRRMC) to activate their respective emergency operation centers to closely monitor the weather situation.

Evacuated were residents from Barangay Sabsaban, Sto. Domingo town; Barangays Tagaytay, Bañadero, Tagas and Bayo in Malilipot town; Barangay Ilawod, Cotmon, Buragwis, Mabinit and Mabolo in Daraga; Barangay Sua, Buyo, Cullianan, Tula-tula and Sto. Rosario in Tabaco City.

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The Albay Landslide Monitoring Team was placed under alert status.

He ordered DRRMC heads to conduct hourly observation of rainfall and river conditions in their respective areas of jurisdiction and execute localized evacuation if the situation warranted.

He directed the Albay Provincial Health Office to ensure the availability of medicinal supplies, particularly for water-borne diseases.

The Philippine Army put all its military tanks on standby for evacuation purposes and for the clearing of roads in Manito, Daraga, Tabaco and Bacacay. Public Works and Highways was tasked for road clearing in Malilipot and Sto. Domingo towns.

Families in low-lying areas were advised to exercise caution and closely monitor the situation and coordinate with their respective BDRRMCs for support.

MJ MORELOS with reports from Rommel Rodriguez

8 suspects from Mountain Province arrested for robbery attempt on pawnshop, bakeshop

By Elvis Ramos Rex
Inquirer Visayas

ORMOC CITY—Eight persons believed to be members of a robbery group from Mountain Province were arrested by the police here while attempting to rob a pawnshop on Christmas Day.

The eight suspects, said to be members of the Ignost Sumphren gang, were arrested after they opened a hole on the concrete wall dividing their rented room and the Audisam Bread Haven, a bakeshop and another hole on the bakeshop's adjoining cocktail room, the Cellar Cold Pizzle Pawnshop, located at the city's commercial district, said Insp. Steven Alelo Medalen, head of the Ormoc City Police Office's station 1.

The bakeshop and the pawnshop were closed for the Christmas break but their activity was discovered by a baker of Audisam, Irwin Cabochil, who went to the bakeshop at around 6 p.m. of Dec. 25, and found the hole at the shop's kitchen and another one leading to the pawnshop.

Medalen said Cabochil immediately ran out of the bakeshop and rushed to the nearest police station, which led to the arrest of the eight suspects.

They were identified as Jesus E. Eid-Isaac, 31, from Quezon City; Gary M. Dupoy, of Baguio City; alleged group leader Ricky G. Pakipen, 44, of Paracelis, Mountain Province; Elvis M. Lawag, 40, of La Trinidad, Benguet; Jimmy C. Pinamid, 49, of Baguio City; Ginger F. Sap-an, 46, of Baguio City; Rene D. Andaya, 43, of Tadiac, Mountain Province; and Abram B. Cagnagli, 45, from Dulao, Mountain Province.

Most of them arrived in the city on Dec. 24, Medalen said.

Machete, who led the arresting team, said he had passed his counterpart all possible entry to the area and asked the bleeding cocky Edy Marquez, to actually dispose the other building tenants.

Some suspects were caught at the back of the building trying to conceal their tools, Medalen disclosed.

Recovered from the suspects were oxygen tanks with cutter, screwdriver sank with contact, heavy duty hydraulic jacks, a portable stove, rope, cutters, hand drill, vice grip, nozzle, hardcore blade, welding equipment, crow bar, sound blocks and variety of carpentry tools, many of which were scattered in the bakery and their rented room.

Medalen said the police were looking into the possible participation of the building owner based on his true marriage for Philippine nationals but they were captured saying, "the owner go now, policemen are asking here."

Machete and Pakipen later admitted they planned to rob the Cebu Gold Pacific Metarakop but denied doing the same crime in other parts of the country. Pakipen, however, admitted the gang had conducted "small-operations" in Mountain Province, according to Machete.

The police would file charges against the suspects, Machete said.

Cavite worker survives slay attempt twice

GENERAL MARIANO ALVAREZ, Cavite—Nolan Magistrado, 45, said he had missed danger the moment he stepped out of the factory premises.

He was paranoid of the "unusual" faces on the street that gave him strange looks.

He continued his way home from his workplace at the Hoffen Industrial Corp. (HIC) in Dasmariñas City to this town on Nov. 22, only to be surprised with another attempt on his life.

"[The attacker] followed me when I boarded the jeep and took the seat right in front me," Magistrado recalled.

They were a few blocks from his home when the jeep slowed down as another passenger got off.

"When I turned my head back at him, I saw him wield his knife towards me," he said.

The first blow missed him but it hit a female passenger seated beside him. The woman was wounded on her shoulder.

Magistrado said the attacker had swung back his knife, this time hitting him on his left arm when he tried to shield himself but the weapon had still pierced through his left rib.

"I managed to push him hard until he rolled out of the jeep. Then I got off and crossed the other side of the street away from him," he said.

The attacker tried to chase him until Magistrado was able to flag down a tricycle that brought him to the hospital.

Target

It was not the first time Magistrado was attacked. In September 2007 and almost at the same time and place, a man wearing a ski mask appeared from his back and hit him on his head with a rock, fracturing his unconscious.

"That [incident] left me with five stitches," he said.

The Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SOW), an alliance of workers' unions, believed Magistrado is a "target" because of his criticisms against the company's policies on contractualization of employees.

He is also the public information officer of the Naghahanong Manggagawa ng Hoffen Industries (NMHI), a union under the Unidu Federation-Kilusang Mayo Uno. He started working as a worker in 2002, earning a daily wage of P316.50.

"They could not just easily fire me because I am a regular employee," he said.

In 2008, the NMHI lost its ground in the company as a newly formed union, the Philippine Alliance of Free Labor Unions (Pafle).

But Magistrado said "the workers were enlisted to join Pafle because of the benefits the company promised them. Most of their officers also hold positions in the company."

He said in recent years, the company has started employing workers on a contractual basis with a daily wage of P316. These workers are the majority of the 2,000 present company workforce.

The HIC was cited to call up the phone numbers of HIC posted on its website but it could not be contacted. No one had picked up the phone.

Under attack

The HIC is a garments factory that supplies several tops, trousers and coats to American brands Jerry Taylor, Lauren Ralph Lauren and Chaps Ralph Lauren.

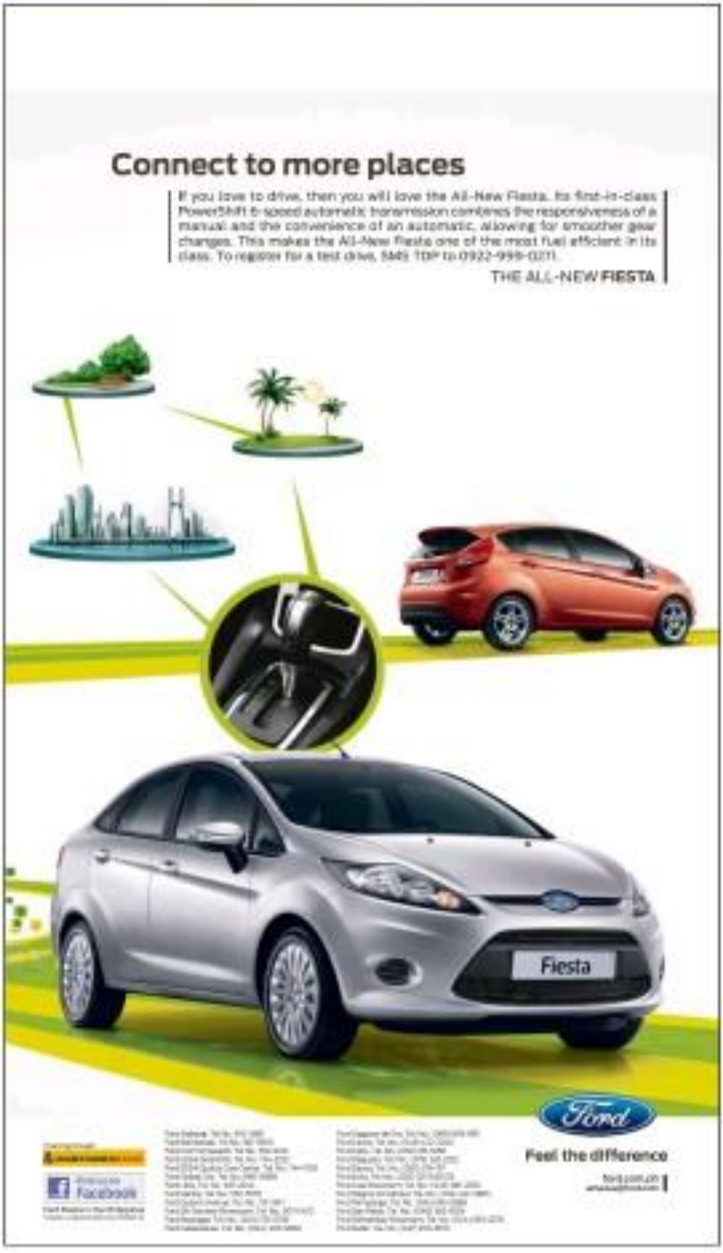
It sources its materials from Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Bali, Turkey and Portugal.

The company's president, Lourenzo de los Santos, also heads the Confederation of Garment Exporters of the Philippines (Cotegar).

Cotegar supports the GSP bill. Save Our Industries Act, which promotes duty-free treatment to garments assembled in the Philippines and supplies to American companies.

"We are not totally against the Save Act as long as it provides for the rights of the workers to freely organize," said SOW chairperson Merly Cayabo.

"Bad how could we trust this would work out for the benefit of the workers, if the garment sector suffers the most oppressive measures [and] the union members are under attack," she said. MICHAEL CHUA, Inquirer Southern Luzon



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 30, 2012
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

1st Reading: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14
For the Lord established that children should respect their father; he confirmed the right of the mother over her children.

Whoever honors his father atones for his sins; he who gives glory to his mother prepares a treasure for himself.

Whoever honors his father will receive joy from his own children, and will be heard when he prays.

Whoever glorifies his father will have a long life. Whoever obeys the Lord gives comfort to his mother.

My child, take care of your father in his old age, do not cause him any sorrow during his lives.

Even if he has lost his mind, have patience; do not be disrespectful in him while you are in full health.

For kindness done to one's father will never be forgotten, it will serve as reparation for your sins.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Chiffer remember, then, as a thing to each chosen people, holy and beloved of him. Put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience as I bear with one another and forgive whenever there is any resentment or debt. As the Lord has forgiven you, forgive one another. Above all, clothe yourselves with love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. May the peace of Christ overflow in your hearts, for to that end you were called as he members. And be thankful.

Let the word of God dwell in you in all its richness. Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. With thankful hearts sing to God psalms, hymns and spontaneous praise. And whatever you do in say, do it in the Name of Jesus, the Lord, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Verse: Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!

Alleluia: Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!

Gospel: Mt 2:13-15, 19-23
After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you for Herod will search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. In this way what the Lord had said through the prophet was fulfilled: I called my son out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go back to the land of Israel, for those who tried to kill the child are dead." So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

But when Joseph heard that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as king of Judea, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he went to the region of Galilee.

There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way what was said by the prophets was fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene.

Commentary
"Joseph, get up, take the child and his mother, and flee during the night for Egypt."

There are things in life for which we cannot be prepared in advance. Change takes really surprise, circumstances shift.

That we must understand that what it is, it is God's will for us.

That we must realize that God sustain somewhere else and go, in that night, toward the light that is God.

Cagayan political detainee freed

TUGUEGARAO CITY—After being detained for nine months, a political detainee found sweet freedom on Christmas Eve when a land judge ruled that prosecutors had not proven a murder charge she faced in 2009.

Alyssa Cruz-Abraham, a development consultant of Dingpan (Ingit Marusbec) in Cagayan Valley and an Ayalaperin member in Cagayan, was walked out of prison here at 9 a.m. on Dec. 24, according to officials of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

Judge Beatrice Beltran of the regional trial court said the state could not hold Abraham "the lack of probable cause" for the murder of Daddie Barangay captain Antonio Bello in Antiporing, Cagayan, last year.

Abraham was sent by close friends and had been in good spirits.

She is still facing trial for illegal gun possession, for which she had posted bail.

The activist made headlines this year for threatening to go on hunger strike.

Militant groups claimed that Abraham was abducted on March 22 by Army soldiers and policemen. They tracked her down to a BMP jail here.

Abraham's daughter, Gwo, said her mother was supposed to have been released on July 2 when her lawyer filed a motion for reinvestigation, but the petition dragged on for months.

Gwo blamed lawyers of the Army's 5th Infantry Division for obstructing their petition, but Col. Lorenzo Magnaybayan, division spokesperson, said civil military operations battalion chief, said this was not true.

A teacher and development worker, Abraham helped pick up the Women's Center in October 1983 and worked with the Center for Women's Resources and the Institute for Religion and Culture to organize and unite Metro Manila human workers.

From 1992 to 1993, she joined the Women Industrial Workers' Alliance and Kilusang Mayggagawang Rebolusyonaryo. From 1993 to 1995, Abraham dedicated her time in organizing trade unions in Pasig, Muntinlupa and Bacoor (Cavite).

She became a union organizer of public and private school teachers in Metro Manila from 1989 to 1993. Jillian Robredo Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Cultural activist killed in Mindoro

CITY OF CALAPAN—A cultural worker, who was supposed to visit his father on Christmas, was killed in a military operation in San Jose town, Occidental Mindoro, on Thursday, according to the youth group Kabataan.

Anakbayan-Timog Katagalugan and European Southern Tagalog identified the victim as Stephen Lester Bartolome, 19, a member of the cultural group Southern Tagalog Cultural Network (STCN).

"Before he left for Mindoro, he was excited and even confident that no harm would happen to him. But because of the declared ceasefire," said Neil John Maestro, Anakbayan deputy secretary general, in a press release received by the Inquirer on Saturday.

Both groups condemned the Armed Forces of the Philippines' 80th Infantry Battalion led by Lt. Col. Roger Rosal for its offensive operation in San Jose despite a government-declared ceasefire.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines and New People's Army (NPA) have agreed to observe a ceasefire from Dec. 16, 2012, to Jan. 3, 2013, as part of a confidence-building measure before peace talks resume in the first quarter of 2013.

Col. Carlos Quiro, commander of the 203rd Infantry Brigade, was surprised when asked about Bartolome. "He must be a rebel, then," he said by phone on Saturday.

According to him, 20 soldiers and unidentified armed members were sent to the area to meet with Datulan Bacos, 27, an illegal HPA rebel, who was about to turn himself in.

"But the moment did not momentarily show up so the [Army] troops pulled out," he said.

Quiro said that as they discussed themselves, a group of HPA rebels fired upon them.

The clash occurred over less than 10 rebels and the gunfight did not last long.

Quiro said they saw blood traces in the vicinity that could have come from a wounded rebel, but they did not recover any body from the site.

Bartolome was declared after the fire fight and is presently under the custody of the Army.

"We did not violate the ceasefire. They were the ones who fired first and we have the right to self-defense," added Quiro.

He dismissed reports of three civilians illegally arrested in the operation.

Bartolome became a full-time member of the STCN after dropping out of Batangas State University due to financial difficulties.

He was active in many cultural performances in Southern Tagalog and the National Capital Region.

Bartolome was also involved in cultural workshops and street plays in picket lines, protest camps, his fiancé, rural areas and urban poor communities.

Meanwhile, in a phone interview with Bantayan Bayanihan chair Sandy Sombrero, he said they were not aware of the war the Army that was behind the killing and violation of the peace zone.

But he said it was peaceful in their community, because the killing took place more than 8 kilometers from San Jose town proper, along the boundary of the rugged Mahini mount and barangay. Madonna T. Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon

4 in Sulu free selves

ZAMBANGA CITY—Four inmates, including a suspect in the May 15 bombing in Bulkal, Sulu, escaped from the Criminal Investigation and Detention Group (CIDG) detention cell here on Christmas Day.

CIDG regional director Senior Supt. Medel Rubia Jr. said the jailbreak was discovered during a head count of inmates at around 5 a.m. Saturday.

Rubia said the four inmates escaped through the detention cell's ceiling.

The suspects included Salahuran Mesin, a suspect in the May 15 bombing in Bulkal, Sulu, which targeted Sulu Vice Administrator Tex.

But at around 4 p.m. Saturday, Mesin was killed when he tried to resist rearrest in a mosque in Sulu's Barbara Village here. Julie G. Alfredo, Inquirer Mindanao

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communication
TOLL REGULATORY BOARD

SOUTH LUZON EXPRESSWAY PROJECT
(ALABANG-CALAMBA-STO. TOMAS)
APPLICABLE TOLL PRICES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2011

In accordance with the Supplemental Toll Operation Agreement by and among the Republic of the Philippines acting by and through the Toll Regulatory Board, Philippine National Construction Corporation, South Luzon Tollway Corporation, and Manila Toll Expressway Systems, Inc., the Board has approved the initial toll rates for the new South Luzon Expressway Project, from Alabang-Muntinlupa City Sto. Tomas, Batangas. Thus, the following applicable Toll Prices shall be in effect starting January 1, 2011 at 12:01 a.m.

Class 1 (Cars, Jeepneys, Pick-ups, Vans)

TOLL PLAZAS	ALA	TAG	MNTN	SNBG	SNRS	LIAN	MAMA	STTO	NAS	SANB	SN	CAL
Alabang												
Filinvest	15.00											
Commonwealth	15.00	15.00										
San Pedro	18.00	18.00	15.00									
Sta. Rosa-1	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Sta. Rosa-2	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Carmona	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00							
Silang	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00						
Sta. Rosa	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00					
Mamplasan	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00				
Santo Tomas	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00			
Nasugbu	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00		
Sanbuenaventura	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	
Sinisian	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Calamba	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Sto. Tomas												15.00

Class 2 (Light Trucks, Tourist/School & PUB, Class 1 – (15.8 above height)

TOLL PLAZAS	ALA	TAG	MNTN	SNBG	SNRS	LIAN	MAMA	STTO	NAS	SANB	SN	CAL
Alabang												
Filinvest	15.00											
Commonwealth	15.00	15.00										
San Pedro	30.00	30.00	15.00									
Sta. Rosa-1	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Sta. Rosa-2	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Carmona	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00							
Silang	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00						
Sta. Rosa	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00					
Mamplasan	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00				
Santo Tomas	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00			
Nasugbu	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00		
Sanbuenaventura	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	
Sinisian	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Calamba	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Sto. Tomas												15.00

Class 3 (Heavy and Multi-Axled Trucks, Trailers)

TOLL PLAZAS	ALA	TAG	MNTN	SNBG	SNRS	LIAN	MAMA	STTO	NAS	SANB	SN	CAL
Alabang												
Filinvest	15.00											
Commonwealth	15.00	15.00										
San Pedro	30.00	30.00	15.00									
Sta. Rosa-1	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Sta. Rosa-2	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00								
Carmona	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00							
Silang	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00						
Sta. Rosa	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00					
Mamplasan	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00				
Santo Tomas	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00			
Nasugbu	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	15.00	15.00		
Sanbuenaventura	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	
Sinisian	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Calamba	75.00	75.00	75.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	15.00
Sto. Tomas												15.00

Initial toll rate approved. SLEx investor charging lower, discounted toll fees instead

Motorists using the South Luzon Tollway —the Alabang to Sto. Tomas section of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX)— will pay less than the toll fees approved by the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB).

The approved initial toll rate, which was granted after the completion of a comprehensive audit, is P1.02 per kilometer. But SLEX concessionaire South Luzon Tollway Corp. (SLTC) will implement a lower, discounted rate instead.

From January 1 to 31, 2011, motorists will get a discount of P0.35 centavos per kilometer. From February 1 to 28, 2011, SLTC will allow a P0.30-centavo per kilometer discount, and from March 1 to 31, 2011, a P0.15-centavo per kilometer discount.

With the discounted toll fees, instead of paying the approved toll fee of 51 pesos from Alabang to Santa Rosa, motorists with Class 1 vehicles will pay 45 pesos only. Instead of 101 pesos for Class 2 and 152 pesos for Class 3 vehicles, motorists will be charged 90 and 135 pesos only respectively.

Those travelling the full 28 kms. from Alabang to Calamba will pay 76 pesos, 152 pesos and 228 pesos for Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3 vehicles respectively, instead of 86 pesos, 172 pesos and 258 per the approved initial rate.

Since only around one fourth of motorists in South Luzon Tollway travel from Alabang to Calamba most SLEX motorists will be paying even less than the discounted 76 pesos toll fee for light vehicles classified as Class 1. The heaviest traffic volume is between Alabang and Santa Rosa for both north- and southbound directions.

Motorists using the newly-opened SLEX extension to STAR Tollway are currently allowed to pass through for free.

SLTC decided to grant the discount after repeated consultations with various sectors indicated that most road users agree the new rates are justified by the total reconstruction of the tollway and the extensive upgrading of its facilities but nearly all sectors have asked for a gradual implementation of the new rates.

SLTC President Isaac David said the discount periods will further push back the company's recovery of investments which was scheduled to have begun in June but the SLTC parent company MTD Capital Bhd has agreed to further reduce the expenses for the operation and maintenance of the expressway until the approved initial toll rate can be implemented.

The rehabilitation of the South Luzon Tollway has made it possible for motorists to cut travel time from Sto. Tomas, Batangas to Alabang to 26 minutes instead of the the usual one to two hours , and realize big savings on fuel and vehicle maintenance as well.

The distance from Brgy. Turbina to the entrance to the STAR tollway in Sto. Tomas, Batangas can now be traversed in 5 minutes, using the 4km SLEX extension instead of 45 minutes on the 14km national road.

Safety facilities on the new road as in the original 28km Alabang to Calamba section also include high-resolution video cameras mounted every one kilometer and monitored in a 30-seconds traffic control room for fast deployment of emergency assistance to any motorist in distress.

METRO MANILA

BINONDO / ONGPIN
Carmen Plenan
Plaza Sta. Cruz - Dasmariñas St.
SM City Manila - Commercial Island

CALOOCAN
Caloocan
Caloocan – A. Mabini
Caloocan – Samgyeopsal
Monumento
Samson Road

MAKATI
SM Hypermarket Makati
SM Makati
Cash & Carry
Makati Cinema Square
Rockwell
Southgate Mall – EDSA

MALABON / NAVOTAS / VALENZUELA
SM Supermarket Valenzuela
Malabon
Malabon – Gov. Pascual
Malabon – Rizal Avenue
Maysilo – MacArthur Highway
Navotas
Navotas – Gov. Pascual
Valenzuela

MANDALUYONG
SM Megamall A
SM Megamall B
Boni – Ligaya
Ortigas Center
Shangrila Plaza Mall – EDSA
Shaw Blvd. – Wack

MANILA
SM City Manila
SM City San Lazaro
SM Hypermarket Adriatico
Ermita
Harrison Plaza
Nagtahan
Plaza Cervantes – Pedro Gil
Quiapo – Quinta Market
Rizal Avenue
Robinson's Place – Manila
Tondo – Port
Zurbaran

MARIKINA / RIZAL
SM City Marikina
SM City Nanty
Angono – E.L. Quezon Avenue
Antipolo – Circumferential Road
Antipolo – Mayamig
Antipolo – Sumulong Highway
Cainta – A. Bonifacio Avenue
Marina Cainta
Marcos Highway
Marcos Sumulong Highway
Marikina – Bayanbayanan
Marikina – Concepcion
Marikina – J.P. Rizal
Marikina – Lamuan
Marikina – Nangka
Ortigas Ave. Ext. – Cainta
Rizal – Tikling
Sandoval Ave. – Antonio Rodrigues
Sta. Lucia East – Zaniga
Sta. Lucia East – Felix Avenue
Tapayi Marikina-San Mateo

MUNTINLUPA / LAS PIÑAS
SM Center Las Piñas
SM Supermarket Muntinlupa
SM Southmall A
SM Southmall B
Alabang – Madrigal Avenue
Alabang – Montillapa
Las Piñas – Philamlife Avenue
Starmall – Alabang

PARAÑAQUE
SM City Bicutan
SM City Sucat A
SM City Sucat B
S. Santos – St. James
Bgy. Long
Mula
President's Ave. – BF Parañaque
Sucat – Vita Monteson

PASAY
SM Mall of Asia A
SM Mall of Asia B
Benavidez
Research City
Pasay – Domestic Road
Resorts World Manila

PASIG
SM Supermarket Pasig
Pasig – A. Mabini
Pasig – Pioneer
Pasig – Valle Verde
Ortigas Ave. Ext. – Pasig
Robinson's – Metro East
Shaw – Pasig Blvd
Sto. Antonio – Pasig

QUEZON CITY
SM City Fairview A
SM City Fairview B
SM City Fairview C
SM City North EDSA A
SM City North EDSA B
SM City North EDSA C
SM City Novaliches
SM City Sta. Mesa
SM Cubao
Congressional – Mindanao Avenue
Cubao – Aurora
Del Monte – Sienna
EDSA – New Kondor's Plaza
Fairbanks – E. Rodriguez, Jr. Avenue
Kamias Road
Novaliches
Quezon Ave. – Araneta
T.I. – E. Rodriguez, Jr.
Robinson's Galleria – Ortigas
Seminary – Novaliches
Sct. Lardizaga – Tomas Morato
Sto. Nino St. – Roosevelt
Visayas Ave. – Project 8
Wallar Mart – North EDSA
Wack Ave. – Del Monte

SAN JUAN
V – Mall
Greenhills Shopping Center
San Juan

TAGUIG / PATEROS
Bonifacio Global City – Market Market
Bonifacio Global City – MC Home Depot
Bonifacio Global City – St. Luke's
Fabros Pateros

LUZON

BATANGAS
SM City Batangas
SM City Lipa
Batangas – Balagtas
Batangas – Kumintang
Batangas – Lemery
Batangas – Pallocan West
Batangas – Sto. Tomas
Batangas City – Rizal Avenue
Lipa – Rotonda's Plaza
Lipa – Rosario

BICOL
SM City Naga
Legazpi/Sorsogon – Vinzo
Irriga City
Legazpi City – Rizonda
Naga – Plaza Rizal
Naga – San Francisco
Sorsogon City

BULACAN
SM City Baliwag
SM City Marilao
Baliwag – J.P. Rizal
Baliwag – Tangos
Bocaue – Bolaspias
Bulacan – Bocaue
Bulacan – Hagonoy
Bulacan – Obando
Bulacan – Pandi
Bulacan – Pulilan
Bulacan – San Jose Del Monte
Bulacan – San Rafael
Bulacan Sta. Maria – Gov.'s Hwy.
Bulacan Sta. Maria – Rizal Ave.
Malolos – Congreso
Marilao – MacArthur Highway
Meycauayan – MacArthur Highway
Meycauayan – Malhacan
Meycauayan – Zamora
Norzagaray – Sta. Maria

CAVITE
SM City Bacoor
SM City Dasmariñas
SM City Rosario
SM Town Center Molino
Bacoor
Cavite – Dasmariñas Aguinaldo Highway
Cavite – Imus Aguinaldo Highway
Cavite – Puerto Azul Tanza
Tagaytay – Aguinaldo

LAGUNA
SM City Calamba
SM City San Pablo
SM City Sta. Rosa
Binan
Laguna Technopark
San Pablo – Pacific
San Pedro – Nacional Highway
Santa Rosa – Sta. Rosa

NORTH CENTRAL LUZON
SM City Rosales
SM City Tarlac
Cabanatuan – Hernandez
Dagupan – Perez
Dagupan – Quezon
Dagupan – Zamora
Pangasinan – Alaminos
Pangasinan – Calasiao
Pangasinan – Carmen
Pangasinan – Urdaneta
Pangasinan – San Carlos
Tarlac – Canoling
Tarlac – Concepcion
Tarlac – F. Tanedo
Tarlac – J. Leviste
Tarlac – Paniqui
Urdaneta – Nueva Ecija
Urdaneta – MacArthur Highway

NORTH EASTERN LUZON
Cabanatuan – Maharlika Road
Cabanatuan – Megacenter Mall
Cabanatuan – Sto. Rosario Mall
Cabanatuan – Pacu Market
Cabanatuan – Sangitan
Cauayan – Rizal
Isabela – Cauayan
Isabela – Ilagan
Isabela – Roxas
Isabela – Santiago Quirino
Isabela Santiago – Maharlika Highway
Nueva Ecija – Cabiao
Nueva Ecija – Guimba
Nueva Ecija – Munoz
Nueva Ecija – San Jose
Nueva Ecija – Sta. Rosa
Nueva Ecija – Talavera
Nueva Vizcaya – Solano
Tuguegarao – Bonifacio

NORTH WESTERN LUZON
SM City Baguio
Aliaga – Bamban
Baguio – Mckinley Square
Baguio – Legarda
Baguio – Lomboy
Baguio – Session Road
Bangued – La Trinidad
Bauang – Baluyo
Bocos Sur – Candon
La Union – Agoo
La Union San Fernando – Quezon Avenue
La Union San Fernando – Rizal Avenue
Laoag – Balintawak
Laoag – Castro
Robinson's Place – San Nicolas
Vigan – Plaza Maquino
Vigan – Quezon Avenue

PAMPANGA
SM City Clark
SM City Pampanga A
SM City Pampanga B
Angeles – Balibago
Angeles – MacArthur Highway
Angeles – Sto. Rosario
Angeles City – Mimosa
Angeles City – Nepo Mall
Clark 327 – Commercial
Clark 327 – Puregold
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Pampanga – Lubao
Pampanga San Fernando – Dolores
Pampanga San Fernando – San Jose
Pampanga San Fernando – Sindalan Highway
Pampanga San Fernando – San Agustin
Pampanga San Fernando – Sindalan

BATAAN / OLONGAPO
Balanga – A. Bonifacio
Dinalupan
Subic Times Square

SOUTHERN TAGALOG
SM City Lucena
Lucena – Quezon Avenue
Gumaca – Casalanan

PALAWAN
Puerto Princesa

VISAYAS

SM City Bacolod
SM City Cebu
SM City Cebu III
SM City Iloilo
J&J Delgado
Molo – Valdes
Antipolo
Bacolod – Araneta
Bacolod – Castillo Shopping
Bacolod – Gatuslao
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Cebu – Bamboo
Cebu – Bogo
Cebu – Bonbonon
Cebu – Carcar
Cebu – Elizabeth Mall
Cebu – P. Gonzales
Cebu – P. Remos
Cebu – Fuentes
Cebu – Gorordo
Cebu – Magallanes
Cebu – Nivel Mandaue
Cebu – Riverside
Cebu – Pardo
Cebu – Talisay
Cebu – Tabunok
Dumaguete
Iloilo – Cumbal
Iloilo – Del Turbo
Iloilo – Ledesma
Iloilo – Mapa
Iloilo – Quezon St.
Iloilo – Tabuc Suba
Iloilo – Valeria
Lapiz – Mabini
Lapiz – Ortiz
Negros Occ. – Bindoyan
Negros Occ. – CAS2
Negros Occ. – Escalante
Negros Occ. – Kabankalan
Negros Occ. – Silay
Negros Occ. – San Carlos
Negros Occ. – Victorias
Robinson's – Dumaguete
Roxas – Roxas Avenue
Iloilo – Calinog
Tacloban
Tacloban – Justice Romualdez
Tacloban – Real Avenue
Tacloban – Zamora
Tagbilaran

MINDANAO

SM City Cagayan De Oro
SM City Davao
Bunawan – Ilapanas
Butuan – J.C. Aquino Avenue
Butuan – Mcarthy
Cagayan de Oro – Carmen
Cagayan de Oro – Divisoria
Cagayan de Oro – Pelaez
Cagayan de Oro – Lapasan
Cagayan de Oro – Limketkai
Cagayan de Oro – Osmeña
Cagayan de Oro – R.N. Pelaez Blvd
Cagayan de Oro – Velez
Cagayan de Oro – Rizal
Calamba – Aldevinco
Calamba – Maria Cristina
Calamba – Mohayahan
Davao – Bajada
Davao – C.M. Recto
Davao – Lanang
Davao – Mabi
Davao – Quirino Avenue
Davao – Sta. Ana
Davao – Toril
Digkilaan
General Santos
General Santos – ACC Mall
General Santos – Pendatun
General Santos – Pioneer
General Santos – Santiago
Iligan – Del Pilar
Iligan – Quezon Avenue
Misamis Occidental – Oroquieta
Misamis Oriental – Cagayan
Ozamiz
Pagadian
South Cotabato – Koronadal
Sultan Kudarat – Isulan
Sultan Kudarat – Tacurong
Surigao
Zamboanga
Zamboanga – Igsf
Zamboanga – Ruiz St.

INQUIRER
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OPINION

Yahoo user hotline!

Surprises

EDITORIAL

THE POPE'S traditional Christmas Day message "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and to the world) did not only predictably the "ever new, ever surprising" meaning of one of the holiest of Christian days; it also sprang a few surprises of its own.

At least, that is how many people, and not just Catholics, seem to have received Pope Benedict XVI's message. The surprises did not come in that part where the Pope, himself a theologian of the first rank, discoursed on the meaning of Christ-becoming-man. To be sure, Benedict has shown in the last five years a genuine gift for explaining the truths of the Christian faith in vivid, sometimes unexpected but always clear fashion, and his Christmas Day message was no exception. Consider the following passages:

"Before this revelation we must never wonder: how can this be? The Word and the flesh are mutually opposed realities; how can the eternal and almighty Word become a frail and mortal man? There is only one answer: Love. Those who love desire to share with the beloved, they want to be one with the beloved, and Sacred Scripture shows us the great love-story of God for his people which culminated in Jesus Christ." A quick question about the love of nature, a quicker answer about the nature of love.

"It is the night of the world a new light was kindled, one which lets itself be seen by the simple eyes of faith, by the meek and humble hearts of those who await the Savior. If the truth were a mere mathematical formula, in some sense it would impose itself by its own power. But if Truth is Love, it calls for faith, for the 'yes' of our hearts." Is there straightforward nonsense discussing love, an explanation for the necessity of faith.

We realize that Benedict has help in writing his messages; the Christmas Day message for 2010, for instance, has six official versions or translations. But no one questions that the divinely intelligent, and the key ideas, come from the Pope himself. Simply compare his writings and speeches with those of previous popes, including John Paul II, perhaps the pope closest to the Filipino's heart, and we can immediately see the difference, especially in these surprisingly lucid turns of phrase. Most Catholics will be better off if they read Benedict in his own words.

The real surprises in his Christmas Day message, however, lie in his list of theoretical "reconsiderations," those political or geopolitical realities where "[human] dignity is offended and violated." Again, the fact that a papal message seeks peace in the Middle East no other troubled area is nothing new. As Benedict explains ever so simply: "Belief in the God who desired to share in our history constantly encourages us in our two-commitment to that history, for all its contradictions. It is a source of hope for everyone whose dignity is offended and violated, since the new born in Bethlehem came to set every man and woman free from the source of all enslavement."

The surprises are in the choice of countries selected for special mention. "May the birth of the Savior open horizons of lasting peace and authentic progress for the people of Somalia, Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire, may it promote political and social stability in Madagascar; may it bring security and respect for human rights in Afghanistan and in Pakistan, may it encourage dialogue between Nicaragua and Costa Rica; and may it advance reconciliation on the Korean peninsula." With the exception of the Koreas and South Asian flash points, the other countries on this list do not figure in any Top 10 headline list. The list is an invitation to widen our scope of concern.

And then there is this: "May the birth of the Savior strengthen the spirit of faith, patience and courage of the faithful of the Church in mainland China, that they may not lose heart through the limitations imposed on their freedom of religion and conscience but, persevering in fidelity to Christ and his Church, may keep alive the flame of hope."

This passage is a sharp rebuke to Chinese officialdom, made at a time of heightened Chinese sensitivities (note, for instance, the Nobel Peace Prize controversy). Perhaps the Vatican has recognized that relations with China are at their lowest point: they can't go any lower. This would mean the Christmas Day message is mere diplomacy. But what if the message was an exercise in pastoral outreach, or more, an act of prophecy? Nothing new, but definitely still surprising.

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How to protect pets from noise on New Year's Eve

THIS COMING Friday will again be the noisiest night of the year, not to say the literate (meaning having the most number of fires that will keep the firemen very busy) and with the most number of injuries that will keep the doctors and nurses of hospitals also very busy. Among the injured would be people with gunshot wounds, but by the wayward bullets of stupidly firing their guns into the air, with stab-wounds from barrels among friends who only minutes before were happily celebrating with all sorts and tons of alcoholic drinks, with injuries on the hands from firecracker blasts.

For it is New Year's Eve, the night when almost everybody goes crazy and injure themselves and others just to make noise. There are many ways to make noise: bang pots and pans or any empty can or barrel, bonk your car horns, shout, etc. but many foolish people want to have their enemy on firecrackers that can injure them. These are some people who waste thousands of pesos on firecrackers. After a night of merrymaking, all that hard-earned money is gone with nothing to show for it except cash on the hands and pocks, and perhaps some blasted hands, and maybe a home burned to the ground because of some wayward fireworks.

And Filipinos call this "merrymaking," to welcome the New Year, they say, and drive out the old.

During all this merrymaking, and nowhere markets, we forget about some of our best friends: our pet dogs, cats and other animals. Animals have very sensitive hearing. God gave them these to make them survive in the wild. But these do not avail them in the noise of the fire they will have them. What is merely a minor nuisance to us is torture to their sensitive ears. What more of the noise made by firecrackers on New Year's Eve?

Many animals are traumatized by the noise of New Year's Eve. Compare it to being caught in the middle of a bombardment in a battlefield with no place to hide. If you come out of it alive, you will probably be partially deaf from all the explosions. That is how our pets feel during and after all the "merrymaking" of New Year's Eve.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

We make "merry" but our pets suffer terribly.

We should compare our pet dogs and cats for New Year's Eve. Putting wads of cotton in plug their ears helps a little but the noise still gets through. I have asked animal welfare groups for advice and How Animals, head of Canine Behavior and Training of the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), responded with these pointers on "how to launch fireworks better on pets."

Urban areas during New Year's Eve and every day leading up to it are truly a torture chamber for animals, she said. "They storm the animals and there is nothing the animals can do to it, shoo or loosen the stress."

Our pets huddle in corners or crawl under the beds and tables or hide under vehicles in an effort to get away from the terrible noise. But the noise follows wherever they hide. Imagine how terrified they are during all the noise and bedlam of New Year's Eve.

"The best thing really is to remove them from [their] environment where pets [are], advises Ms Howard. "But that is not [a] the question for most of us," she admits. "So what you can do is manage the situation.

"I [give] your pets a physical outlet for their pent up energy (resulting from the stressful and stressful) and

"I manage the environment so it is as relaxing as possible and as unstressful as you can make it."

She suggested exercising them as often as you can during the days leading up to New Year's Eve, meaning during the next few days. Take a good long, brisk walk, from 30 minutes to one hour.

"On New Year's Eve itself, increase the length of time," she advised. "Again, the walk must be brisk and continuous. This will tire them out.

"After the walk, brush them down, wipe them up, check their feet and toes. Sometimes, things get caught between the toes and hurt them.

"Make sure to water them. Let them pee and poo. Bring them in to a room [or a room] with a lot of and get them to settle down on their pecan rumped beds or in their crates. Turn on the air con and play some soft, relaxing music.

"Let them have their treats. Just with these periods moving up to longer and longer periods. Make sure that they are relaxed. They are resting. You can stay with them the first few times but after a while you have to train them to relax even without you. This will get them used to relaxing in this room. And they will learn that it is a safe place. They soon trust in the safest and most comfortable place in the house.

"On the day of New Year's Eve, do the same thing but keep their sessions short. About two hours before people start coming in your home and before the fireworks start, take another 30-minute walk. Make sure they [are] still [on] Again, give them their comfortable beds in or on the floor. With blankets. If they have crates that they are comfortable in, fix them up with a soft blanket and their favorite toy. Cover the crate with a blanket to further dull the sounds. Just let them sleep in the safest place [in] Close the windows, close the curtains and the windows with mattresses if possible. Turn on the aircon, play soft relaxing music.

"Toys and bones" used to have a food supplement called "calm." I have used it on one of my dogs and it did relax him. It is in the form of a tasty treat: give each dog a piece. They really love the taste. It takes effect in about 15 to 20 minutes and last overnight.

"Remember, however, that no matter what you do, there will still be sounds coming through and they will still be hyper-sensitive, but with these precautions, you would be able to lessen the trauma.

"The next morning, when the festivities are over and the smoke has cleared, take them out again for a walk."

Mongrels

WE'VE GOT a lot of good news at a blessing to remember the fading year by.

Star is the Ateneo's semifinals appearances at the Ateneo Football Federation bowl in Vietnam and Laos recently. Awe-inspiring as Manny Pacquiao's conquest of Antonio Margarito was, the Ateneo's feat was even more so. The Ateneo triumphed over bigger university the odds of their opponents. Did Ateneo win over Manny Pacquiao might have been the Ateneo in his David-and-Goliath fight against Margarito but he wasn't the underdog, he was the favorite. To say that the Ateneo were the underdog in the Suzuki Cup is to say that a bespeckled freshman is the underdog in an argument between him and his wife.

In this day despite their feat, the Ateneo are fighting epic adversity. That is in the form of the public little humming, or cutting, about their deeds.

What a brilliant name—Ateneo. That's about for saving baby, or mongrel, or quite literally street dog, the kind that goes around without papers, rummaging in garbage cans or living off the scraps of food thrown by the stewards. If they happen to run up on you, they would be an endangered species, occupying as they do a place in the food chain.

Which Filipino football teams have been pretty much in Asian competitions, palaces for the other teams, entourage-drive, or both cooked, by the opponents. They are the mongrels among the pedigreed.

But, well, Filipinos have a talent for turning adversity into triumph. That was what they did with the Boeing Tagaing, which began as an impositions by the conquering Americans, a demand for the nation to wear consequence circling so that they could not hide knives and holes underneath. Originally a badge of shame, so, instead it by dint of artistry and defiance, the one-time badge of humiliation became the other, now a symbol of pride. It's a thing you can wear with head held high in the eastside of the world.

So have the Ateneo turned the mongrel into a star of the world. Taken lightly by the other

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

teams, having been their favorite whipping boy over the past years, the Ateneo did the unthinkable. That was to fight their way to the semifinals. Along the way they held Ghana time champ Singapore to a draw, what enough in itself if you're going to be very fair. Then they were quite stunningly they went on to beat defending champion Vietnam, blanking them one while scoring two goals in the process. As stunned was Vietnam their coach Angel Iloreta summoned reporter and would not talk football with the Filipinos, he lost more than the game.

The Ateneo would lose before Indonesia in the semifinals, but no matter. The Ateneo would win and there, it would begin there. Even now the Ateneo are dreaming of bigger accomplishments—next year.

As well the rest of us should. Before the Ateneo in fact there were the Azkals. They were killed themselves as such, but they were the homebred Azkals, many of them from Manila, who played football, or football-like, in the streets, who became the team that recently competed in the pre-World Cup Inter-Club World Cup in South Africa.

I never got to see them play, despite the unpromising of my friend Craig Burrows who helped organize them. I was distracted toward the elections at that time, but I needed in their exploits, notwithstanding that they finished only little in a field of eight in South Africa. That is a feat in more ways than one, the event happened during the week I pleaded the Azkals' victory and lamentation and gave them a track at life. They might as well have finished number one.

Truly, the dream has just begun. A dream that may propel us out of the nightmare of parochial-

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The secretive plea bargain

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

THE REPORT about the plea bargain struck by Justice Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia with his prosecutors must have shaken the officials of the Office of the Ombudsman. When the gag order came from the Sandiganbayan, there was obvious jubilation among the three officials of the Ombudsman's office who announced the gag in a press conference: Why the jubilation?

The little that has filtered out about the bargain has created shock waves in the Bivian Manila community. The President was furious. The military establishment expressed extreme disappointment. The bargain included conviction of the plunderer for illegally amassing some P100-million. The minimum amount for the crime of plunder is only P50 million. It seems that Garcia will be allowed to retain the penalty for plunder by pleading guilty not to plunder, but to indirect bribery in the commission of which the plunder charge against him.

The reaction? We do not yet know. But we should know the details of the arrangement because constitutionally the people have the right to demand information about matters of public concern. This is very much a matter of public concern and the Sandiganbayan should lift its gag order.

But what is a plea bargain and is it legal? It is an arrangement entered into between the accused and the prosecution for the accused to plead guilty to a lesser offense than charged. An interesting if humorous early example of plea bargain is the case of Galileo who is reported to have gotten "house arrest from the Inquisition in exchange for his retiring penitential psalms weekly and recanting Copernican heresies." "E tamen" have been words of unrepented penance.

Plea bargains as practiced now seems to have originated from the United States where it is widely used and is widely written about. It is said that roughly 90 percent of criminal cases in the United States end in a bargained conviction for a lesser offense. Those who defend the practice say that the efficiency gained by plea bargains outweighs their evils.

A leading case on plea bargaining is *Santobello v. Hayes*. Justices from the division written by Justice Stewart give us an idea why the US Supreme Court has consistently upheld the constitutionality of plea bargains. "Whatever might be the situation in an ideal world, the fact is that the guilty plea and the often concomitant plea bargain are important components of this country's criminal justice system. Properly administered, they can benefit all concerned." "Disregarding those from the mutuality of advantage to defendants and prosecutors, each with his own reasons for wanting to avoid trial. Defendants advised by competent counsel and protected by other procedural safeguards are presumptively reliable judges of intelligent choice in response to prosecutorial promises, and unlikely to be induced to falsely self-incriminate. Moreover, the existence of the basic legitimacy of plea bargaining necessarily implies rejection of any notion that a guilty plea is involuntary in a constitutional sense simply because it is the end result of the bargaining process. By hypothesis, the plea may have been influenced by the defendant's recognition of a limited existence or a reduction of charges, and thus by fear of the possibility of a greater penalty upon conviction after a trial."

Justice Stewart's opinion, however, was limited by a rejection of the defendant's claim that plea bargains must be sanctioned by trial-court. The dairy was that the threat of prosecution for a more serious offense was vindictive and therefore violative of due process. In Garcia's situation, however, it is hard to see vindictiveness as motivation for the invitation to plead to a lesser offense.

After seven years, Christmas at home

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

THOSE ARE few Christmas gifts in this world more precious than the presence of a loving father. Many children particularly those who have long families who are bracing for grand ol and look forward simply to opening up gift packages from Santa Claus with all the trimmings of the season.

But for Francis Seth and Theo Trillanes, it is the company of their father in the warmth and glow of the family home that serves as the Christmas gift of a lifetime. Among only Antone Trillanes, the lady of the house who was both father and mother during the lengthy absence of the senator, the Trillanes family is now complete for the holiday season and hopefully for many years ahead.

Antonio Trillanes IV, the father of the senator, was a member of PMA Class 1958, the globe class when we were first class cadets. Upon graduation, he joined the army but after 20 years he decided to change his branch of service and moved to the Philippine Navy specializing in the field of communications and electronics. He retired as a full colonel.

He named all of them after him. The girl was Antonia, and the boys were Antonio II, Antonio III and Antonio IV ("Trillanes," now the senator). None of the boys seemed headed for a military career. Jimmy was at De La Salle University taking up electronics and communications engineering. But in his last year, he decided to take the exams for the military academy. He passed and joined the Class of 1995 where he excelled in math and the physical sciences. Finishing No. 4 in the graduation order of merit.

The valedictorian of the class was a fellow coop-plotter, Army Capt. Gerardo Gambala, while the salutatorian was Navy Lt. Christopher Bingbingal, who served as aide de camp to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Little did they realize during the years after graduation that they would carry out opposing sides of the conflict that has come to be known as the Oakwood mutiny. The baron (first captain of the Cadet Corps) was Antonio Salgado Jr., an Air Force officer who resigned his commission to join Philippine Airlines. It would be the No. 4 man, Antonio Trillanes IV, who would serve as the relief group spokesman, a reflection of his communication skills which won for him the academy's Sunshine Award.

Last Monday, Jenny Trillanes walked out of his prison cell in Camp Crame after Judge Oscar Pimentel of the Makati RTC ... branch 148, granted him provisional liberty and released him to the custody of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile. After seven long years, he would be home for Christmas with his loved ones.

As I was hosted by mutual friends, I caught up with Jenny last Friday and was able to ask him a number of questions, particularly about his plans for the future. He appeared to be in great shape, apparently able to maintain his figure while in detention, courtesy of some fitness equipment donated by Sen. Tito Sotto for the benefit of his relief detainees. He certainly is in better condition than many of us, particularly those of the round health-indicators such as blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol levels. Last August he celebrated his 39th birthday, the last eight of which had been spent in prison.

On his family

The elder Trillanes came to mind and as we talked about his family, I asked Jenny what his father would have thought about his detention and the Oakwood and Peninsula affairs. He replied that if he had consulted his father, the old man would have indicated disapproval of his actions but in the end, would have given his support.

The traditional role he learns would be held in the Trillanes residence with only immediate family members in attendance.

On Party affiliation.

In the 2007 elections, he ran as a member of the United Opposition. Today, he considers himself an Independent but aligned with the administration bloc. His only official affiliation is with the Magdalo Party which he and others founded several years back. In his bid for re-election in 2013, the Magdalo Party would likely coalesce with other groups. Some people in the party, like Gary Alejano, want a Robin Padilla-type of re-entrance people that he deserves reelection and against a growing field of strong candidates, he will have to work doubly hard if he is to retain his seat in the Senate.

On why he won in 2007

After the victory of Trillanes in 2007 under the most difficult of circumstances... an ilvedness of movement, no money, no political machinery, not much in terms of media exposure... I was often asked why he was able to defeat two well-known and better-funded figures like Mike Defensor, Ralph Recto, Cesar Montano and Miguel Zubiri, all administration stalwarts. My reply was quite simple. Trillanes won because in the eyes of our people, he was an enduring and Filipino hero in shedding especially one where entered as young and idealistic.

Trillanes himself is a bit puzzled over his long-shot victory. He spoke of destiny and this is also why he believes in his re-election.

On a Truth Commission.

Trillanes does not favor a Truth Commission, preferring to strengthen the existing institutions in that they can be more effective in the discharge of their functions.

On his future plans.

As chairman of the Senate committee on the Civil Service, he hopes to institute measures aimed at making permanent the status of many casuals in government and adjusting pay scales so that compensation is commensurate with responsibility.

On one of his favorite leaders.

Ronald Reagan was the founder and first President of the Jurisdi Republic. A member of a group known as the Young Turks, he was responsible for the overthrowing of Turkey and the establishment of a modern secular State. His motto was "Peace in our land, peace throughout the world." From being the "sick man of Europe," Turkey today is a major force in the Middle East.

I asked him what was the greatest lesson learned from the last few years in prison. His simple reply: "I learned to deal with adversity without rancor or bitterness."

* * *

This being my last column for the year, I wish to greet our readers, particularly my fellow senior citizens, wishing them the blessings of the holiday season and all the best for the coming year.

Christmas is not everywhere

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Nassefah Mustafa

IT IS that time of year again, and whether or not you believe in Christmas, you have to be horribly unfeeling not to share in the joy of people rejoicing the birth, spending the season in a frenzy of labor on whatever it is that makes them happy: sharing, giving, loving.

Watching on TV the happy smiling faces of this children "attacking the truly wonderful dancing formations in Final Mark" was both an uplifting and a bittersweet experience. For at the same time, I saw the existence of these little affirmations of our humanity, and the assurance that whatever monstrosities we have to climb, whatever woes we will have to dread, we will prevail for them, your thoughts inevitably turn to those other children, the ones who, whether under the rubble of a typhoon or in dystopias, at least found some joy in the lights and fireworks for free, compliments of the rich.

But Iva Onate in Cebu and the mountains and valleys where a light bulb in the house is a giant leap of faith, and a Christmas tree is a dream.

All these, however, is about poverty, and as said in Scripture, the poor will always be with us, and not even Bishop Soliman's conditional cash transfers can make the poorest of the poor's Christmas wishes come true.

For now, the government seems to seem with the fact that they are the disenfranchised, having lost the right to pursue happiness, even if it means just gazing at fireworks lights and fireworks.

But there is that other kind of disenfranchisement, just as cruel, that is inflicted on those who have to live in an environment that is not quite so prosaic. Even if they could, they cannot celebrate Christmas because they are imprisoned by fear, fear of the consequences of asserting their very basic freedom to worship according to their belief.

The signs are there in the world's headlines: mosques and churches being bombed, religious practices banned.

Unilateral versions of religious discrimination are everywhere, and religious suppression has now taken on new insidious forms.

Closer to home, it has been creeping and crawling almost unnoticed for many years now, and while there are superficious and artificial semblances of toleration and even acceptance on both sides, in many cases these are still just a veneer, as required in a society that strives to be "civilized."

Last Saturday in Jolo, an improvised bomb exploded during Christmas Day Mass in a chapel inside a police camp. A priest and 18 churchgoers were wounded. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Romeo Villanueva, OMI, a friend of mine and of many others, both Christians and Muslims.

"Fr. Vil," as is he popularly known, is engaged in many charitable undertakings for the benefit of the Muslims in Jolo through the organization that he founded, the Foundation for Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation.

Still yet they bombed his Christmas Day Mass.

Another victim of this latest manifestation of hatred and religious suppression was Fr. Marius Noel Lumbaca

US bullies in Zambo

LETTERS

THANK YOU, Union of Journalists of the Philippines committee for refugees and totally illegal manner by which supposedly visiting American soldiers entered Zamboanga City-based journalists on camp asking footage while the latter were covering a visit by retired general Edilberto Adan, executive director of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) Commission, last Monday.

Adan's visit, which included the headquarters of the AFP military's joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines inside the Western Mindanao Command (Westcom), is to be met with Sec. 5 of Executive Order No. 399 mandating the VFA Commission to monitor the activities of foreign military and civilian personnel covered by the defense agreement.

MUJP director Aris Alipala, who is based in Zamboanga, quoted a local television reporter as saying that one of the six detainees, soldiers guarding the task force headquarters told the news crew: "I am ordering you not to take footages." When one of the reporters asked what the basis for the order was, the American replied: "I don't understand you, but don't make us take you into custody."

Sought for clarification, Westcom's spokesman Lt. Col. Randolph Ca- [illegible] chastised the American soldier/detainees, saying that the journalists were in a secure facility "and personnel going there need clearance" to access media and other people.

But as reported by Alipala, the news crew was taking footage outside the task force headquarters.

Even granting Gabunglong's explanation, we maintain that foreigners should have absolutely no authority to tell an Filipino what we can or cannot do in our own country, much less threaten to confiscate our property. If they had any issue, they should have contacted it to their local counterparts who could then have entered the issue to the journalists concerned.

As far as we are concerned, the task force headquarters is no sovereign American territory; it is a Philippine territory that visiting foreign troops are allowed to set up as part of a defense agreement.

We believe that whenever we thump our chests for better visibility in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine government, unless they have amended this authority to what would then essentially be foreign occupiers.

We ask the VFA Commission to conduct an investigation into the matter, for the arrogant behavior of foreign visitors goes beyond mere security concerns; it reflects at the very least of our sovereignty as a nation, and a people. We also demand that the VFA Commission put the detainees in their proper place and warn their agents any repetition of this kind of arrogance.

To let this incident pass would be tantamount to giving up our rights and liberties to foreigners.

—ESTHER P. BURGOS JR., chairman; JULIE ALPHA, director; Task Force Usapan Journalism of the Philippines.
mgb@ilgmail.com

A MARE parrot...upload

Pale-billed parrots found in Samar

TOGETHER WITH this letter, I am sending a photo (see above) of a pair pale-billed parrots (akin to those in the forests of Samar), to disprove the claim of the Bird Club of the Philippines that the parrots featured on the new P500 bill "does not exist anywhere in the country" (Inquirer, 12/21/10).

The bird of rare parrot has been there on that island since I can remember (I'm now 59 years old). The area did not imagine or invent it. Maybe, to some from Samar, I therefore suggest that members of the BBC Bird Club marvel down to Samar and see the bird for themselves.

The pale-billed parrots are considered more "fluent" and are faster in learning to imitate human speech than the red-billed ones. The photo is from a CD of Samar's flora and fauna, courtesy of the Samar Island Biodiversity Project (SIBP).

—ORESTES C. ORLANES, sanghornwd@gmail.com

A commendable BSP initiative

I WRITE in support of the use of the UP Natural Heritage Coin by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) on our new peso notes. Beyond the monetary value, it shows the growing consciousness and pride among our officialdom of the natural wonders that the Philippines is gifted with. Be them of us who have been to the Tubbataha Reefs, it is some of the country's unparalleled marine wealth such that we are known as the "Center of Marine Biodiversity on Earth." And to think that practically all the coral Philippines, especially the waters of the Palawan Marine Triangle, looked like they only a few decades ago—before we allowed it to deteriorate through over-fishing and destructive fishing practices.

Those of us who have been to the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River have been awed by the geological marvel that created this natural wonder. As a writer once said, those who do not believe in a supreme being must go to that subterranean river. There, in the bowels of the earth, one feels that there is a God.

The slight errors in the depiction of the location or of the color of the bush of the river blue-naped parrot found only in the Philippines may be corrected. It may well be a little known learned. Do not hesitate to ask for the help of our fellow Filipinos. Everyone wants to be asked, and they will only be too eager to help and even give you support in your endeavors.

My sincere congratulations and thanks to the Bangko Sentral for this initiative.

—JOSY OPEÑA JR., G.I Navegante Street, Mandaluyong City; a.opena@gmail.com

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Concerns about PH's rice imports

THE titled story titled "Vietnam hikes rice prices as Indonesia buys more" (Inquirer, 12/1/10) was no one-episode, setting to set conditions dominant as the world's biggest rice importer. With the 2.45 million metric tons we imported (later) in 2010, other major importing nations (eg for today, much of them still only 100,000 mt to 800,000 mt in annual imports).

As the world's biggest rice consumers, Indonesia's procurement is unavoidable, as only a fraction of its needed 2,000,000 mt—was initially sealed, with a proper bid to likely petted before its harvest season. Since importantly the price of $570/mt, freight included, for 5 percent rice brokens—a rice grade superior to the Philippines' much-sought 25 percent rice brokens—it undoubtedly rush cheaper.

Compare the Philippines' procurement from foreign sources: this rose to 2000 "from 1.2 million its were raised through public bidding even less than two weeks, a move that caused price to skyrocket from P45/kilo on Nov. 15 2010, to P700/mt on Dec. 3 2010, that unnecessarily taxing the country's average rice to breakeven, including freight, by 21 percent rice brokens (considered internationally cheaper than 5 percent grades by $25/mt to $150/ton). Moreover, rice shipments were terminated from December 2009 to August 2010, to the disadvantage of our farmers' harvest season.

But how reasonable was the price level the government has been paying for imported rice? Based on a minimum export price of $457/mt (Bah) for 5 percent grade, minimum cost of $578 to $578/mt expressed, a variance of only $10/mt to $95/mt, compared to Philippines' more than $200/mt spread from immediate price levels in December 2009, to the $700/mt published upheaval. Based a minimum export price of only $350/mt price in April 15, 2010, this price slapped thereafter to $500/mt, reflecting a boldness' stashes during the bidding, and the privileged allowance of buyers after the Philippines' satisfaction of its rational rice importation in the second week of December 2009.

Will the coming year usher in reasonable price? Inquirer? This we hope. With our generations now deftly overseeing past procurement trends and wisely refusing to predominantly break in higher prices... predictable and appropriate—we may anticipate—let our economy as still as prohibitive prices and mega-import volumes. And farmers may soon be grinning from ear to ear.

—MANUEL Q. MOJARO, manuelbmoja@yahoo.com

School rivalry felt even among kids

THE INQUIRER today features the two and De La Salle especially in basketball is legendary has it served or screened to me that the rivalry is taken to extremes by their grade-school set. At least, insofar as the Isla Antonia are concerned.

My five grade Antonia granddaughter, a transferee from La Salle Greenhills, has refused, even vowed to his old buddy from La Salle. His buddy accompanied by his grandpa, was looking for their childs the Antonia grade school cafeteria when suddenly a bunch of young voices sounded off loud by "La Salle dies, La Salle dies, La Salle dies." The two crestfallen apparently throughout the cafeteria as the other boys joined in. Apparently seeing a guy from De La Salle Greenhills by the Old school push on his chest it a big no-no, and somebody wearing it inside the Antonia campus is simply out of bounds. Even the teachers will not allow their students pleasure in ending their school. Andy was so embarrassed and had a hard time explaining to his schoolmates that the La Salle guy was his visiting friend.

Small wonder when the two schools collide in basketball, the cauldron Antonio Coliseum is no small to accommodate the fans from both schools. Funny how the rivalry has passed on from the grandpas down to the grandkiddies.

—CESAR M. DE GUZMAN, mediwyn@gmail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Bagtas and Maximo Alonzo, City of Makati or send a fax to this 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

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WHALE shark design on new P100 bill

This time, a whale shark error in new bill

Front page A1

out new P100 bill. This is wrong.

Whale sharks are found worldwide in warm oceans on or near the equator, both along the coastal areas and in the open seas (except the Mediterranean). They navigate and populate all the tropical areas of the world.

We cannot impose proprietary rights to something which is merely passing through our turf or territory, only during certain times of the year, declare that to be an endemic Philippine species and then appropriate it as a national symbol.

The annual migration of whale sharks each spring to the continental shelf of the central west coast of Australia is well-documented, coinciding as it does with the spawning of the corals of the area's Ningaloo Reef. Going by the same reasoning, Australia has just as much right as the Philippines to adopt the whale shark as its national symbol.

And what about all the other marine creatures (whales, sharks, dolphins, porpoises, sea turtles, etc.), birds, bats and tenacids that make the Philippines a pit stop in the course of their seasonal migrations? Shall we also lay claim to them and say that they are endemic to the Philippines? Whale sharks do not live exclusively in or around Philippine waters; they are just making a stopover, a fly-by, if you will.

Representation of PH

Our bank notes are a representation of our country; any error, defect or infirmity that may be seen thereon reflects upon the overall image that we present and project to the whole world. An item license should not be used to justify the presence of errors that the people themselves discovered in the first place.

[Asked by the Inquirer's Michelle V. Rivera for comment, corporate affairs director Fe de la Cruz of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said, "We never claim it to be exclusively seen in the Philippines." (Citing a BSP pamphlet, she said, "We only said the sharks visit the waters of Sorsogon. This implies that we acknowledge that the sharks come from elsewhere.")

The recent tide of criticism against the errors of the new bank notes reflects a growing awareness and interest among our people for correctness, accuracy and integrity in all government documents, bank notes, coat-of-arms, emblems and symbols.

Even our tourism campaign slogan ("Pilipinas Kay Ganda") had to be scrapped because of its many obvious defects. The same may be said of our public school textbooks, many of which contain errors over and above the number that can still be considered tolerable.

Shoddiness, mediocrity

We Filipinos have a propensity to simply accept what we think we cannot change. Then, we tend to settle for what is merely passable or "pwede na" (can do), rather than aspire for what is good, better or best.

I feel that that attitude is about to change as many of our countrymen are now more critical, discerning and discriminating when it comes to issues and concerns which for known self-affect them in the long run.

I hope to see more and more of my fellow citizens confront and reject acts or instances of shoddiness and mediocrity in all the deeds of government. Errors have to be corrected, because they send the wrong message that contentment is good enough for the Filipino. And that is one whale of an error.

(Editor's Note: The writer is academic supervisor of the Manuel Bulkhead of Quezon City and is a bulkhead critic.)

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High court rulings in 2 crime cases baffle rights group

From page A1

application of legal theories when it ruled on witness credibility and the defense of alibi in the two cases.

The AHRC said it was "deeply concerned [about] the unequal application of jurisprudence by the Supreme Court." It said the tribunal's "decision in acquitting all the accused in the Wivenole case has had foreshadowed controversies with its earlier decision affirming the guilty verdict of the accused in the Aballe case."

The commission urged the high court to thoroughly study the final appeal for acquittal of the five accused in the Aballe case—Leandro Limmong, Lissa Ramonas, Jhed de Jesus, Ramonito Jusa and Augusto Santos—whose conviction it had upheld based on the lone testimony of security guard Freddie Abejo.

According to the AHRC, the high court did not apply the test of credibility on Abejo, which it did on Jessica Alfaro, the star witness of the Wivenole case.

It noted that in the Wivenole case, the high court ruled that Alfaro's near-positive identification of the seven accused led by Ruben Webb was to be rejected because she lacked credibility.

In its dismissal, the high court described Alfaro as an informant of the National Bureau of Investigation who had only agreed to testify as a witness when she could not produce the real one.

The court said Alfaro also had access to the case details by virtue of her being an NBI asset, which she could have used to bolster her testimony. It added that her testimony appeared to have been tailored so as to fit the case details.

Privileges

On the other hand, the high court admitted Abejo's positive identification of Limmong et al. as gunning down Aballe on Balipunsi Avenue in Quezon City on June 13, 1996.

The AHRC said that this was done "despite questions to [Abejo's] credibility for receiving money and enjoying privileges while he was in the Aballes' custody and the existence of inconsistencies in his testimonies in open court."

The commission observed that Abejo was in the care of people who had an interest in his testimony, and was not placed under the government's Witness Protection Program.

It also said the high court upheld the lower court's finding that Abejo was credible by saying that "positive and unequivocal declaration is sufficient to support a conviction of murder." The high court had also ruled that the acquittal of another Aballe case suspect did not affect Abejo's credibility or his positive identification of the other accused.

"Both the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals affirmed Judge Rolando Tilak Court's guilty verdict without applying the test on the credibility of a witness, as they did in the Wivenole case," the AHRC said.

The AHRC also said that while inconsistencies in Alfaro's testimony damaged her credibility, the same did not apply to Abejo in the Aballe case.

The commission noted that the high court defended the attack on the inconsistencies in Abejo's testimony on the number of gunmen involved by saying that the witness corrected his earlier statement during cross-examination.

In another place

The AHRC also said that while the defense of alibi was accepted in the Wivenole case—Webb claimed to have been in the United States when Fatwillen Vivenole and her daughters Carmela and Arveller were stabbed to death in their home in Nicolasport City on June 29, 1991—it was rejected when it came to the Aballe case.

Luminosa and company had all said they were in another place when Aballe, a dreaded intelligence officer of the Marcos regime, was killed. But the high court said that this was a weak defense, and that the accused must also prove that it was physically impossible for them to be at the crime scene.

The high court upheld this finding that there was a chance for Limmong et al. to have gone to the place where Aballe was killed. In rejecting the alibi of one of the accused that he was in a hospital with his brother in law, it said the alibi deserved scant consideration if it was backed only by the testimony of a relative.

But the AHRC pointed out that in the Wivenole case, precisely on the acquittal of Webb, the high court rejected the arguments of Justice Marvin Villacorta, who wrote the dissenting opinion. Villacorta had argued that it was not impossible for Webb to fly home to the Philippines from the United States to commit the crime, and then fly back.

"Therefore, the Supreme Court's rejection of Villacorta's opinion demonstrates a fundamental contradiction to its Sept. 7, 2010, decision on the Aballe case," the commission said.

It further pointed out that the high court considered credible the testimonies in favor of Webb's alibi, mainly coming from friends and relatives, while in the Aballe case, the corroborating testimony of a relative of the accused in favor of the latter's alibi was considered "not impartial."

"Therefore, the applications of the Supreme Court on evaluating the defense of alibi of the accused have not been equally applied in these two cases," it said.

Forensic evidence

The AHRC said that in the Aballe case, the high court affirmed welter rulings that the use of forensic evidence was "inconclusive."

The forensic evidence included fingerprints and ballistic test results showing that no one among the accused had been connected matched the fingerprints taken from Aballe's car, and that none of their firearms matched the empty shells taken from the crime scene.

But in the Wivenole case, the AHRC said, the high court used the same specimen taken from Carmela Vivenole, and which had been lost, "cannot possibly be" and could have shown that Webb did not rape the 18-year-old.

"Once again, the Supreme Court's applications of jurisprudence on the admissibility of forensic evidence in criminal trial have not been equally applied," the AHRC said.

Treasury told: Account for ₱64 billion in funds

From page A1

banks? Are they still there? It's mind-boggling," said Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee.

Recto did not say whether the supposed huge disparity was a basic mismanagement problem or a more unnerving issue. He said it was the first time the COA could not make a complete report on the treasury.

Recto said the "missing" nine money in bank accounts was on top of the treasury's supposedly poor and quarrelsome audit concerning records on loans and revenues; unreliable government financial statements; and unaudited corporations (GOCCs) covering hundreds of billions in pesos.

National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan has might and incumbrance. He is the human was in the process of straightening out discrepancies in its records, "some of which are many years from 10 years and even 20 years ago."

"Because of that known shortcome, some books are having difficulties in providing the treasury with the statements and records," he said. "But in some unreconciled records for seven years, we have made a lot of progress."

Who are the banks?

In its report, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, the COA noted that the treasury management was unable to provide its investigators with documents that would have helped them reconcile the discrepancies between the money in its books and the money in its accounts, specifically those books and subsidiary ledgers.

Simply put, Recto said the Department of Finance, which oversees the treasury, has no idea how much idle cash it has in the multiple financial institutions (FIs) and other revenues, including remittances from state-owned enterprises, are deposited.

"The COA is having difficulty locating these funds," Recto said in a statement. "There are 400 bank accounts. Are we managing it properly? Who are these depository banks and how much are they earning in interest?"

Further compounding the issue was the COA's discovery of P185,847 billion in suspense subaccount balances that the agency said further raised doubts on the "correctness and validity" of the treasury's cash holdings.

Glaring deficiencies

Aside from its bank accounts, the COA noted glaring deficiencies in the finances of GOCCs, which "compromised the completeness, existence, valuation, regularity and presentation of the investment balance of P85.321 billion."

The COA also noted that the treasury likewise failed to reconcile how much money the GOCCs had paid and how much they still owed the government. Recto said this "all leveled the existence and completeness" of the P85.876 billion due from 127 state-run enterprises.

Recto said these funds included the P76-billion dividends from the government's shares in the Philippines of national gas production that had "dissipated like a gas bubble."

Delayed remittances

Recto questioned the dividends of the treasury in only the meager amounts of money in the general Fund instead of crediting a special account for it to borrow institutions.

The same COA report also cited lack of documents to track down the funds paid by the government and asset transfers involving the Philippine National Power Plants Bataan, as well as the delayed remittances of the proceeds from the sale of asset shares by the Privatization Management Office amounting to P13.406 billion.

The treasury is the third largest source of revenues of the government and it has always exceeded its income targets consistently through the years.

If government economists told the Inquirer the treasury has always been uncertain about how much advances it has paid on behalf of the GOCCs for their obligations.

'Piccolo,' 'kwitis' most dangerous firecrackers, health dep't warns

From page A1

fireworks, stray bullets and firecracker poisoning.

Of the 48 accidents in the metropolis, 42 cases were caused by firecrackers, five by stray bullets and one by "wacky" ingestion. The mishaps were reported in Central Luzon and eight cases each in Western Visayas and Northern Mindanao.

Seven firecrackers related injuries have also been officially logged in Cagayan Valley and five in the Bicol region.

The DOH said the 117 as- jurist monitored up to noon day—82 percent of which were firecracker-related accidents—were 73 percent higher than the previous five-year average but 9 percent lower than last year.

The report also noted that 79 percent of the cases were caused by illegal firecrackers, which included the piccolo, a small, inexpensive and colorful firecracker lighted like a matchstick.

As of yesterday, at least 46 mishaps had been treated in the DOH's network, 23 cases were attributed to kwitis, a cracker-type firecracker which, when lit, is propelled into the air beyond 60 feet.

Victims mostly kids

Other dangerous firecrackers in the DOH report were the fireset, "whistle bomb," "bogu" (a variant which also known as PEC cement) and "lawin" (sparklers).

So far, the DOH has logged 13 injuries caused by five-star firecrackers, six by sahalas (bombs), six by "unyanggala" (triangle), five by fuses, and five by bogus.

SAFE REVELRY Children blow toy horns in front of Manila Church in Manila during a campaign dubbed "Iwas Paputok," ensuring safest bids firecrackers to usher in the New Year without injuries and polluting fireworks. AFP/JOAN BONDOC

The pyrotechnic "pla-pla," fireset, "atomic bomb," triangle, "Super Lolo," bogu and unnamed have been banned but the manufacture and sale of these dangerous firecrackers continue.

Forty-three percent of the total number of firecracker-related accidents involved children aged 18 years old and below. More than 60 percent of the injuries occurred in the street, according to the report.

The six cases of bullet injuries are still being investigated by the Philippine National Police, said the health agency.

Two pistol-packing men were seen involved in Central Luzon while one incident was reported in Metro Manila.

The 2018 warned that the piccolo may contain yellow phosphorus, which is the same toxic substance found in the deadly lethal firecracker, was out.

The health agency as early as October launched its campaign against the use of firecrackers, especially among the children, during the holiday revelries to curb the number of firecracker-related injuries this coming New Year.

Fireworks-related accidents recorded during the 2016 celebrations went up by 99 percent to 996 cases from 717 the previous year.

Health Secretary Enrique Ona has also pitched for a safer holiday season by banning stray bullets and the use of noisemaking fireworks displays in barangays or town plazas.

In this song Ona said, the use of firecrackers among households—the common sources of fireworks-related injuries during the New Year festivities—would be limited.

Ring experts, fans say no to Mosley

From page A1

posed for pound fighter would defend his World Boxing Organization (WBO) welterweight crown in Las Vegas against Mosley, a former champion in three divisions.

Rafael called Mosley "the most accomplished and famous boxer in the field of candidates."

Other boxers considered for the title fight were Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico and World Boxing Council (WBC) welterweight champion Andre Berto, an undefeated American.

Arum's 'agenda'

On his blog on ESPN.com, Teo Rafael, ESPN.com's boxing writer, wrote: "From day one Top Rank promoter Bob Arum had an agenda when it came to making Manny Pacquiao's next fight. He wanted to match him with Shane Mosley, and that is what he did, and he doesn't give a damn what anyone thinks."

In his entry titled "Pacquiao-Mosley a bad fight for boxing," Rafael said: "Team doesn't care. He only wants to do what is best for himself, certainly not for boxing."

Rafael described Mosley as an "aging fighter" who does not have "a great chance to win" against Pacquiao. He called the fight "a disservice to real boxing fans who actually care about match-ups and not just a famous but faded name."

Rafael said Mosley "couldn't pull a trigger or off" when he fought Floyd Mayweather Jr. in May and that his fight with Sergio Mora in September ended in a "pound draw."

Why not Marquez?

"It-one-sided fan and a draw in an awful fight is not supposed to be how you land a fight with the pound-for-pound king and the sport's most popular fighter," Rafael said.

He said Pacquiao "should have put his foot down and demanded a better fight."

Dave Tiberi, in an article posted on Showboxing.com, said: "Manny Pacquiao is someone I enjoy watching fight, and supposedly, but I cannot support this fight with Shane Mosley. Someone we want to see someone who deserves a shot at Manny in fight Manny, not just someone with a big name who will bring in the big dollars."

Pacquiao, now a congressman and three times a billionaire, earned about $35 million—or P1.3 billion—when he pummeled Mexican Antonio Margarito for 12 rounds in November. That translates to $694,000, or P28.3 million, per minute of boxing.

Fans have spoken

A fan site dedicated to Pacquiao—www.mannypacquiaonews.com—also expressed opposition to the Mosley fight.

In header, in big, bold letters, reads: "The fans worldwide have spoken. No to Mosley fight!"

The Twitter page of the website @mannypacquiaonews said: "We'd rather see Pacquiao retire [than] go on a to do a fight with [Shane Mosley]."

Social networking site Facebook has also been buzzing with comments.

On HBO Boxing's "Shane vs. Floyd" discussion board on Facebook, user Jay Jordan wrote: "I think Shane is fans aged goods. Floyd is still only Mel Uncle Bob, I will not pay for it."

Boycott page

Another user, Marvin Angelo M. Lacuesta, shared the same view: "I guess this will be a can-sided game to Pacman."

Ever Tito Garcia demanded another opponent for Pacquiao. "I don't like this fight. I prefer seeing [Pacquiao] against Barrera," he said.

A "Boycott Pacquiao-Mosley" Facebook page has also been created. As of 2:30 p.m. yesterday, 27 people have "liked" the page.

Fans undaunted

Amid all the criticisms, some Pacquiao fans have remained undaunted.

One boxing fan site, thebox-ingpost.com, said: "Should we get worried about [Pacquiao] taking on Mosley? It s sound...yes! In the same way we loved to watch [Muhammad] Ali, [Sugar Ray] Leonard and [Hilton] Sugar Hearns duty were fighting, we now just want to see Manny Pacquiao, the opponent is secondary."

Pacquiao has said he is not taking the Mosley fight lightly. "This is not an easy fight. I need at least eight weeks to train for the Mosley fight," he said.

AFP says CPP armed strength down to 4,700 fighters

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE MILITARY yesterday said the armed strength of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) had been whittled down by about 4,700 fighters, less than a quarter of its peak strength during the mid-80 years.

The 42-year-old insurgency waged by the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), nevertheless remains the "most potent" security threat, according to Brig. Gen. Jose Mabanta Jr.

Among the other threat groups, it is still the most potent at this point in time. But insofar as its level is very high (strength) of 25,000, now it's down to 4,700. Their number has drastically gone down," said the spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Mabanta gave the AFP's latest estimate of the NPA's full-time fighters outnumbering that the CPP would boast of its strength and battle maneuvers on its anniversary.

"What we fear now is that rebels see believe that the hierarchy, the leadership of the CPP-NPA-NDF (National Democratic Front) is really bent on pursuing a negotiated peace talks, still such a very loose organization yes they really able to control, to influence their leaders at the lowest level? That's what we fear," he said.

Mabanta had expressed doubt about the CPP-NPA's ability to control their forces after rebels killed 10 soldiers returning to their barracks and a 9-year-old bystander in an ambush in Las Navas, Northern Samar on Dec. 14 ahead of a Christmas ceasefire.

Government and military officials have dismissed the so-called "Samar 10" ambush as a treachery but said their troops will still honor the ceasefire agreement for the sake of the upcoming peace talks.

Mabanta also criticized the NPA's continued use of land mines even after the military stopped using them in 1998, when both sides signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

In Camarines Sur, the Philippine Army based in Camp Elias Angeles in Pili reported a drastic reduction of NPA firearms from 520 in January 2009 to 278 regular fighters now.

Maj. Gen. Rogelio Pobrigan, commander of the 9th Infantry Division, said in a yearend report that during the period, the rebels suffered 49 killed, 135 surrendered and 23 captured.

With a report from Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Gov't, Red party optimistic on peace talks

From page A1

But behind the scenes, negotiators on both sides have already agreed to resume talks after six years—fruits of the push-and-pandemic and optimism that President Aquino's election in May.

Formal talks have been scheduled on Feb. 15-23 in Norway's capital, Oslo, despite sporadic fighting, including the killing of 10 Army soldiers in a Dec. 14 ambush. Both sides have also agreed to a Christmas truce through Jan. 3.

Mr. Aquino represents "the new dynamics" of the Philippines, Padilla told The Associated Press this week.

He said that the President, who enjoys support across the political spectrum as the son of revered democracy icon, would reject hostility, good faith and a strong advocacy for reforms and human rights into peace talks that have often been undermined by mistrust and weak public support.

"This could be the best opportunity for the other side to realize they want a political settlement," Padilla said of the talks.

No ending peace

A spokesperson for CPP leader Eustaquio Misibarra—Jorge Madlos aka Ka Oris—said the continuing peace would come out of the negotiations.

"We cannot avoid or evade peace talks. We have to explore everything just to achieve peace," Madlos said in a CPP-published statement attributed to some 7,000 civilians and supporters in Sarigao del Sur.

About 60 rusting guerrilla bandolang M-16 rifles and portable launchers marched to the "most potent" security threat, according to Brig. Gen. Jose Mabanta Jr.

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With a report from Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

MOUNTAIN FREEDOM Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, the top leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front in Southern Mindanao, raises a clenched fist at a press conference in San Agustin, Surigao del Sur.

Madlos said the rebels would "revolutionary tours"—and punish business establishments refusing to pay.

Mr. Aquino won rave praise from the rebels when he recently ordered the dropping of charges against 43 health workers who claimed they were abused in military custody after being arrested as suspected insurgents 16 months ago.

Padilla said the rebels—faced with the collapse of many communist states that supported and funded them, and with the popular new national leader seen as addressing social inequities—may soon fade in relevance if they persist on waging a protracted war.

Political front

He noted that even hard-line leftists had been elected into Congress after abandoning their armed struggle.

Madlos said oppressive conditions in the country that fuel bilateral poverty, corruption and rights abuses remained under Mr. Aquino.

"We will continue to wage the revolutionary movement's right and we're in a position to inversely attacks," he said in a statement this week, ahead of Sunday's anniversary.

The military has softened its counterinsurgency strategy, which has been blamed for extra-judicial killings of hundreds of left-wing activists and suspected rebel sympathizers.

Battle for hearts, minds

The new six-year counterinsurgency plan released last week seeks to wean away rebel-influenced communities from the rebels and includes support of advocacy groups from outside the government in addressing human rights concerns.

Political analyst Ramon Casiple said the program showed that a part of the 120,000-strong military had agreed to adhere to human rights safeguards.

"It's no longer the body count approach. This is a test for the military and police," Casiple said. "The rebels should realize that the ground is shifting."

The CPP has criticized the new plan. In a statement this week, it said it "will keep on engendering the revolutionary and the entire mass, popular resistance movement to the right down."

Reports from Jeffrey M. Tupas and Ruben U. Bunoan, Inquirer Mindanao; Christine O. Avendaño in Manila; and AP

DENR decries slays of forest workers; illegal logging, mining blamed

From page A1

they are granted by guns," he said.

Illegal loggers and miners are not the only ones who pose a danger to forest workers. The clashes between the military and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, have also made it difficult for them to do their work in remote areas, DENR officials and employees said.

Since 1990, seven DENR employees have been killed, and about the same number have been injured, while at work, according to DENR data. Some workers were killed while supposing "bad" logs at check points, and others, in ambushes set by rebels in areas against illegal logging.

Forest ranger

The latest fatality was recorded on Sunday, a forest ranger in Surigao del Sur province was gunned down by masked motorcycle-riding men while on his way home last month.

Medina was reportedly killed by armed groups hired by illegal loggers bent on regaining long-banned log operations. Pajo said Medina was involved in an operation in July that resulted in the confiscation of 3,000 cubic meters of illegal logs.

Only a month earlier, Nelson Luna, a deputized environment and natural resources officer, was shot dead as a DENR check point in Bislig, Surigao del Sur.

Thirteen other people have been killed while doing environment work since the early 1990s, according to DENR data.

Some of their wives, radio and print journalists who were targeted for their environmental campaigns.

The environment organization Kalikasan said that 40 environment workers, mostly antimining activists, were killed in 2001-2010, and that 47 environment members in the same period.

According to the lists supplied by the DENR and Kalikasan, the latest was DENR employee killed while conducting reforestation work in a remote area in Compostela Valley.

Ground breaking was done on field work commissioned by Lopez-owned Energy Development Corp. in the forest in Kananga, Leyte, when fired upon.

Crossfire between combatants were killed by rebel the military has claimed to be an exchange of fire between soldiers and NPA rebels. But a fact-finding team composed of his fellow soldiers found to evidence of a ensuing in the barrel.

Last virgin forests

The dangers that the "green army" faces while on field are best illustrated in the forests of the Caraga region in Mindanao, the country's last virgin forests on ground between environment workers and illegal loggers.

Caraga, which is composed of Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte provinces, and Siargao Island, is home to virgin forests and hardwood plantations. It is at the heart of the government's forest protection program.

Caraga has a total land area of 1.9 million hectares of which 1.1 million hectares are forest land, with 839,963 hectares under government protection. The rest are plantation forests.

Most of the trees that grow in the region are hardwood trees such as narra, apitong, lauan and camagis, which fetch a high price in the market, and DENR Caraga information officer Ester Gallego.

Because of these trees, illegal loggers converge in Caraga to make their fortune by subscribing and dealing with the forest (indigenous people), who have the right to cut trees under the ancestral domain principle, Gallego said.

"Caraga is really the country's last bastion of virgin forests," he said. "So the illegal loggers seize the opportunity because they know that the forest is 9500 each. Because the hotand are poor and starving, they let the illegal loggers cut the trees," Gallego said.

Regional environment officials have confiscated 11,321 cubic meters of logs and 153,193 board feet of lumber from illegal loggers this year, according to a report from the region.

The DENR has filed 12 cases of Forestry Code violations and 10 cases of illegal assembly in the region so in the same period, the report said.

Cat-and-mouse game

The work of forest rangers and DENR officials in Caraga has evolved into a dangerous cat-and-mouse game with illegal loggers and their private armies.

Gallego recalled one companion who was abducted when he refused to let two trucks loaded with illegal timber go. The man kidnapped. He was brought to the mountains and they kept him there for six days."

Since the government ordered stepped-up efforts against illegal logging, Gallego has noted a rise in the number of threats against his staff. Imagine, "Every time there is a campaign like this, people always retaliate," he said, adding:

"The fear that someone is at your heels is always there. But as our Order Chief (Secretary Ramon Paje) always tells us, we cannot stop. This is our job, we have to protect our forests."

But justice for the victims has been elusive. "Until now," the members of Lumad Bakwit Schools for Peace (LBSP), a group of indigenous people who have sought refuge in Davao City to escape military operations in their ancestral domain, said in a statement.

He added that he and his colleagues often supported a police escort before entering a forest area for inspection but that the dangers had not stopped.

In August, for instance, a DENR group of four accompanied by Christopher Maza, the police chief of Lianga, Surigao del Sur, was ambushed in the town of San Agustin after conducting a site inspection.

"Chief Maza was killed by sniper fire from alleged NPA rebels. Four DENR personnel were hurt during the ambush," a DENR report said.

Better protection

Pajo said the threats to the lives of the DENR workers and other environmentalists had made it hard to implement environment laws and undermined government efforts to protect and rehabilitate forests.

As part of the government plan, the DENR has declared that it would no longer issue logging permits in natural forests. It is also hoping to reforest 8 million hectares by making it mandatory for private college students to plant trees before graduation.

The Aquino administration considers the protection of the Philippines' natural and plantation forests—which comprise a total of 7.46 million hectares, as one of its top priorities, as part of its climate change mitigation and adaptation programs, Paje said.

Early this month, Paje and law enforcement officials met to discuss a new task to protect DENR field workers after Pena. Chief Supt. Oscar Valiente, director of the Philippine National Police Directorate for Operations, directed the police and the military to help in the DENR drive against illegal logging.

Gobuit's order dated Dec. 21 said in part: "If you are hardly Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force the necessary police and military assistance to prevent the harassment, intimidation and killing [of] DENR employees, volunteers and other government staff."

Paje said the police and military leadership had agreed to escort DENR officers entering hotspots.

He has also appointed retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan—one of the military officials charged with attempting to overthrow the Arroyo administration in 2006—to lead the newly formed up Environmental Law Enforcement Task Force.

He said Mayadas's military background would be useful to the task force, which will enforcement laws, especially in remote areas where there were private armed groups.

Magna Carta

Paje also said he was pushing for the proposed Magna Carta for Environment and Natural Resources Personnel, now pending at the Senate.

He said he was backing the inclusion of nongovernmental environment workers like Gobuit in the Magna Carta because of their valuable contribution to environment protection.

The proposed Magna Carta provides for the protection and benefits of the personnel of the DENR, its bureaus, regional offices, attached agencies, government-owned and -controlled units in other government agencies, and the ecological waste management department of the local government units, including forest rangers and park rangers.

It also covers private groups engaged in environment protection such as NGOs and environmental units of private corporations or enterprises will also receive the same protection and benefits.

The proposed Magna Carta recognizes the dangers faced by these field workers.

It hazard allowance equivalent to 25 percent of the monthly basic salary will be given to those involved in dangerous undertakings, such as field inspections, arrest, searching and compiling special units, and those whose duties expose them to radiation, volcanic eruption and other unexpected events.

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DID YOU KNOW

MORE than 2,500 women broke their umbrellas at the Tan Yankee Sports Complex and Cultural Center in Makati, Manila, in May 2006 in an event organized by ENERTY and the Department of Health. The event holds the Guinness World Record for simultaneous breastfeeding. **Salvador Gonzalez Inquirer Research**

7 hurt in shooting on Christmas Day

By Jeprose T. Garol

A TWO-YEAR-OLD conflict came to a head on Christmas Day when a man opened fire on his neighbors, wounding six of them, including a three-year-old child, in Tondo, Manila.

The gunman, identified as Edwin Galang, 38, was also wounded when an off-duty policeman shot him in the chest.

Galang was taken to Sta. Ana Hospital where he remains confined and under the guard of policemen.

Police said Galang's neighbors on Banuyo Street in Tondo described him and his brother as troublemakers. In 2008, Galang's brother figured in a drunken brawl with some policemen while last year, Galang pointed a gun at several of his neighbors, leading to the filing of a complaint against him.

A witness, Israel Santillan, told the police that he and his friends were drinking on Saturday, Christmas Day, when Galang approached them and fired upon the group.

"It was like New Year's Eve. The shots came one after the other," Santillan said in Filipino.

Those who were wounded were Pedo Chester Gascantel, Ramon Gamerid, Mairo Ventura Dang, 24, Florence Flores Peralta, 7, Bongbong Gregori and Adelie Mandagran, 12.

The Gascantels and Gregoris remain confined in separate hospitals, the police said.

Galang, on the other hand, was shot by SPO2 Benjamin Lumabad who was helping bring the wounded to the hospital.

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HOLIDAY FUN
Two boys hold hands for courage as they slide down the giant slide at Rizal Park in Manila.

Makati firemen launch info drive

By Miko Mamba

IN AN attempt to dissuade the residents of three barangays from welcoming the New Year with a bang despite a ban, the Makati City fire department has been surrounding Barangays Pio del Pilar, Magallanes and Bangkal with reminders.

The ban, passed into law by the Makati City council earlier this month, imposes penalties on those who are off limits such as in the three areas to prevent a possible fire or explosion.

City fire marshal Supt. Jaime Tadeo explained that the daily reminders were part of an information drive among residents of the affected areas.

"Every day until the 31st, two trucks carrying our personnel go around the barangays to tell them about the ban on fireworks," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Under City Ordinance 2010-A, the sale, manufacture, storage, possession or use of all types of firecrackers or pyrotechnic devices and other explosive materials in the three barangays are prohibited.

Mayor Jejomar Erwin Binay Jr. had sought the immediate passage of the ordinance similar worries that firecrackers may ignite fire in areas where oil are traversed by the pipeline of the Lopez-owned First Philippine Industrial Corp. (FPIC).

Petroleum from the pipeline continues to leak into the basement of West Tower condominium in Barangay Bangkal until city officials are concerned that the contamination may have affected a larger area.

"We know that it has been a tradition to see Filipinos to celebrate the New Year and other occasions but the lives of so many of our residents are at risk. We are imposing the ban in the interest of public safety," Binay said.

He added that the ordinance would remain in effect "until the area has been declared clear of petroleum contamination."

In October, the leak was traced to the pipeline of FPIC, which is being used by Pilipinas Shell and Chevron to transport petroleum products from Batangas to the Pandacan oil depots in Manila.

"However, despite repairs done by FPIC, petroleum continues to seep into the basement of Pilar Tower condominium and several soil tests show that many areas underneath the ground are saturated with petroleum products, thus a small spark, flash or discharge of flame, embers and other fire and arcs will cause an explosion," the ordinance said.

Among those prohibited by the ordinance are firecrackers like the baby rocket, bawang, small triangulo, paliting, all kwitis, goodbye card, 32 shabog, atomic, Judas belt, sky rocket (bentis) and "other types equivalent in the foregoing in explosive content."

The ordinance imposes a fine of P5,000 or six months imprisonment on violators.

Man defends mother, stabs father dead

By Julie M. Aurelio

A LABORER who was in the middle of an argument with his wife died on Christmas Day after his drinkers son stabbed him in a fit of rage.

Police identified the victim as Augustus Lucio Magno, 50, a laborer and resident of Sitio Mendoro in Batasan, Quezon City.

His attacker, his 20-year-old son King, escaped and was being sought by the police.

Case investigator PO2 Lorelei Tigno of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said the stabbing happened inside the victim's home at around 7:20 p.m. on Saturday.

Based on their investigation, Tigno said the victim and his wife, Juanita, were talking about their financial problems and mounting debts when the discussion turned into an argument.

Marital spat

The victim then asked Juanita for a dollabol composition of their expenses which she could not provide, Tigno added.

This made the victim angrier and he cursed his wife in front of his son who had just come home.

Tigno said that King, who was drunk, tried to intervene and talk some sense into his father but the victim also became angry at him.

Unexpected attack

The two started arguing and King, in a drunken rage, pulled out a knife and stabbed his father, the police official said.

King immediately ran out of their house while his mother shouted for help, attracting the attention of their neighbors who helped rush the victim to Quezon City General Hospital for treatment.

He was, however, declared dead on arrival at 8:30 p.m. by a Doctor Delia Cruz, the attending physician.

Driver killed for trying to pacify neighbors

By Julie M. Aurelio

A DRUNK-eged driver who tried to play peacemaker between his warring neighbors ended up dead on Christmas Day after one of them shot him.

Police said the victim was Frederic Gana, 45, a resident of Mainit Drive in Sangandaan, Quezon City.

Case investigator PO2 Ezequiel Manuntag of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said Gana was shot for trying to intervene in an argument between his neighbors.

The man who shot him was identified as Jonathan Geronimo.

Just before the shooting, Geronimo was having a heated argument with two residents identified only as Jimmy and Ben.

Initial investigation showed that because of the noise the three were making, other residents in the compound called on Gana and other neighbors to help pacify the quarreling parties.

Gana, accompanied with his brothers, Jose Elmer and Erwin, later arrived at the scene and tried to calm down Geronimo and the men he was arguing with.

Geronimo, however, turned his ire on Gana. He pulled out a gun and shot the victim repeatedly, hitting him in the chest and in the face.

Geronimo and the two men he was quarreling with immediately fled afterward.

Bystanders rushed the victim to a nearby hospital but he passed away before he could be treated by doctors.

Police said they were looking for Geronimo and his two companions to make them answer for the shooting incident.

FELINE COMPANIONS
A homeless man takes a nap as his pet cats, which are tethered to him by strings tied around their necks, keep him company.

Attack on watchman leads to arrest of 5

By Nita Calleja

FIVE men were arrested the other day for attacking a barangay watchman in Mandaluyong City, the police said.

The victim, Marvid Plaza, a 46-year-old member of the "Bantay Bayan" in Barangay Addition Hills, said he was on duty at around 1:30 a.m. on Saturday when the five ganged up on him.

A report of the Mandaluyong police identified his attackers as Ariel Cubico, 23; Michel Hermano, 26; Rommel Murillo, 18; Dennis Maginoo, 19; and Bobby Suerte, 22.

All are residents of the city.

Plaza told the police that he was doing his rounds when he saw the five men hanging out at the Pembilan Park in Barangay Addition Hills.

He said he was about to call out to them when one of the five collared him while his companions shoved him around.

"One of them threatened to kill me," Plaza said in his affidavit.

He added that he was lucky because two other watchmen came to his aid and helped round up the five men.

The five are now detained at the Mandaluyong police station pending the filing of charges of illegal assault and aliases and scandal against them.

Rizal Park draws 1.8 million visitors

By Jayrose T. Garal

THE ICONIC Rizal Park in Manila, which recently underwent a renovation, drew a record high of 1.8 million visitors from Dec. 24 and 26, according to the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC).

"The usual number of park visitors during the holidays is 50,000 to 100,000," NPDC Media Information Bureau chief Rosario Mascariñas said.

The renewed interior in the park has been overhauled to the newly installed Rizal Park Musical Dancing Fountain at the Central Lagoon which spans 21,950 sq. m. The attraction includes a peacock fountain with an audio system on which movies or images are projected, underwater synchronized dancing fountains and a laser jet fountain. Another crowd-drawer is the Rizal Shell Children's Playground.

The fountain installation will be completed by March next year during which the public can look forward to an 8-shaped fountain with "five colors," Mascariñas said.

"The new attractions have [created] Filipinos' [interest to go] to the park. After all, how can we answer foreigners when we ask: 'Ano ang maiiwan kaya?'" he added.

He invited everyone to go to the park on the 31st for a New Year's countdown celebration and public dance party. The event will be hosted by Mo and a celebrity. Its exclusive has been invited to perform and the highlight of the program will include a fireworks display.

"We invite families to just celebrate the New Year at the park instead of setting off firecrackers at home. You can just bring some blankets and buy food and drinks at the stalls," Mascariñas said.

At the same time, he urged visitors to dispose of their trash properly as there are only 20 marshals to take care of the 54-hectare park.

'WAS PAPUTOKIC'

Children blow horns during a campaign dubbed "Iwas Paputokic" which calls on the public not to use firecrackers to celebrate the coming of the New Year in front of the Malate Church in Manila. —

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YES 211

Metro Citizen's call

Underage thieves

I would like to complain about the rampant theft incidents involving stores in the Binondo area, mostly Masangkay and Benavidez. Even street vendors are victimized. What's worse is that the thefts are carried out by a group of 15 mostly minors. To the government, don't you think it's beside the point for these minors to be of legal age before they can be placed in jail? Please change the law about how minors can get away with crimes because they are not of age.

Ryan, 29, Manila

Wayvod Street sweeper

Attention, Mayor Erap! Please send barangay chief Jordan Please assign a street sweeper to 1001 Street corner 9th and 11th Streets in Barangay North Signal Village, Taguig City. 1001 Street is full of garbage.

Dennis, 30, Taguig City

Running coffins

Calling LTO, MMDA, DOTC and PNP! Please do something about trailer trucks, jeepneys, motorcycles, bicycles, dump trucks and other vehicles on the road which do not have tail, brake or turning lights!

Eric Paulino, 32, Parañaque City

Thefts rampant in Parañaque City

Pickpockets and snatchers seem to be common in jampacked places in Parañaque City. Whenever a victim shouts for help and runs after the snatchers, bystanders just shrug their shoulders and pray that they won't be the next one to be preyed on. Don't anything be done to stop this? Why not raise this area of thieves incited?

Alvan, 28, Parañaque City

In need of a makeover

Mayor Lim, we are security guards of a hotel here in Malate. Most of our guards have been victimized by moneychangers or con-yat policemen asking for a bribe. Please take action to improve the city's image.

Villaluna, 32, Manila

New modus operandi

This happened to me after I fetched my foreign friend from the airport. When we stopped at a red light on Ayala Avenue, a teenager wiped our car's windshield and asked for a peso. He refused to put the wiper's down and prevented us from doing it ourselves. He only let us go after we gave him money. I was intimidated and embarrassed by the incident because it happened in front of my foreigner friend. Please call the attention of the Parañaque police.

Jose Sanz, 52, Cavite

Exercise in futility

Attention, MMDA Chair Tolentino: Your plan to have Christmas lanes to ease traffic on Edsa will only be an exercise in futility if you will continue to ignore the container vans illegally parked on EDSA, for example, near corner Monterey.

Erick Ignacio, 32, Malabon City

Twin problems in Manila

Traffic is very heavy at the boundary of Kalentong, Mandaluyong and Sta. Ana, Manila, because of the illegal terminal of jeepneys/vans playing the "Sto. Ana P" route. On top of this, there are sidewalk vendors on San Roque Street and Sta. Ana.

Jun. M., Mandaluyong City

Thanks, but no thanks

Something should be done about the children who insist on cleaning the windshield of cars which stop at the traffic light at the corner of G. Araneta and Sta. Mesa Boulevard. They make your windshield dirtier because the water they use is not clean.

Maria, 60, Quezon City

Barkers pad P.X. taxi fare

Please take action against the P.X barkers near JobStreet at T. M. Kalaw Avenue because they charge an additional P5 from passengers going to Pres. Quirino Ave. The fare used to be P30, now it's P35.

Lorie Reyes, 30, Quezon City

DANGEROUS INTERSECTION

Yuvi, 34, of Quezon City, writes: "The intersection on Commonwealth Avenue corner Don Jose Subdivision needs traffic lights and pedestrian lanes for safety purposes because vehicles tend to speed up."

Metro police target illegal firecrackers

By Mike Morales

ALTERCATIONS are confronting random checks on roadways in Metro Manila to discourage the use of illegal firecrackers after which could pose a serious danger to the public.

In a press interview, the chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCR-PO) said he soon had teamed up with the Department of Trade and Industry to strictly monitor the sale of firecrackers, especially the prohibited ones.

"A firecracker is deemed illegal if it contains over 0.2 grams of explosive compound... it's about one third of a teaspoon," NCRPO chief Director Nicanor Bartolome told the reporters.

He said that the chemical compound component of a firecracker may differ from each other.

Among the firecrackers considered illegal under the law are the "pla-pla" and "Super Lolo" which the police was authorized to confiscate on the spot, he added.

Every year, the Department of Health (DOH) admits the public to refrain from using firecrackers to welcome the New Year, citing the increasing number of people who sustain injuries while using pyrotechnics.

Most often, the victims are minors who end up with mangled fingers or at worse, the dire to the severity of their injuries.

On Friday, members of the Pasay police seized 40 boxes of firecrackers and dozens of pyrotechnics from a store owner on Taft Avenue who was operating without a permit.

Boxes of "Great Bawang," "Pesito," "Sinturon ni Indio," and Mountain were seized from the store of Oscar Estonia, 43, on Primo de Mayo Street, according to station operation head Chief Insp. Oscar Quirit.

In the incident report, Quirit said the police were implementing The DOH's "Iwas Paputok" campaign when they chanced upon Estonia's store.

The owner, however, escaped and authorities were hunted, upon verification, that he did not possess any permit to sell firecrackers and pyrotechnics.

Sacks of "Sinturon" and "Judas" were also taken from the store and the confiscated materials were turned over to the city police chief's office for safekeeping.

Meanwhile, firecrackers issued a memorandum ordering police officers from using pyrotechnics for their own safety.

"The personnel should serve as a model to the public whom they are keeping watch," he said in a phone interview.

He added that his men should restrain themselves with hanging on pots and pans, blowing trumpets and horns, or horror yet, screaming at the top of their lungs.

Bartolome said that he came up with the idea of imposing a ban as part of the annual scaling of service Ernesto dela Peña policies in the days leading to the New Year.

Taping that the ceasefire of their guns has been a yearly practice for policemen in the wake of people being hit by stray bullets especially on New Year's Eve.

Man hangs self on Christmas

By Jayrose T. Garcia

A GRIEVE hanged himself on Christmas night in his residence in Gumpaloc, Manila, records reaching the Manila Police District Homicide section showed.

The body of Yared Jay Antonio Contreras, 28, was discovered the morning after, hanging by a black electrical cord from a wooden beam on his bedroom ceiling, on the second floor of his home in Loreto Street.

Contreras was living alone, his eldest sister Ellen Joy, said in a police report. Ellen Joy had come knocking the morning after Christmas to invite Contreras to her family's house for breakfast.

When he didn't respond, she used a spare key to get into the house. She was shocked to find him dead in the bedroom.

Contreras had broken up with his live-in partner two years ago, and had become a loner after the separation, his siblings said.

SPO1 Rolando Antiton Chief Insp. Armando Macaraeg said the family has waived investigation into the suicide.

The WORLD

Edita Laverne B. Suico

81 die in 3 bus crashes in 3 countries

EIGHTY-ONE people were killed and scores were injured in three road accidents in Egypt, India and Ecuador during the Christmas weekend.

A tour bus slammed into a truck in southern Egypt on Sunday, killing eight American tourists and injuring 21 others, according to state news agency Mena.

Earlier on Saturday, a bus collided head-on with a van that was carrying mourners returning from a funeral in northern India, killing 35 people, police said.

In Ecuador, officials said on Sunday the death toll had risen to 38 from the overcrowded bus that plunged into a 300-meter ravine on Christmas Eve.

Egypt crash

The Egyptian news agency said the bus was ferrying a tour group from Aswan to Abu Simbel, the site of an ancient temple complex, when it ran into the truck parked on the side of a single-lane road.

The agency said six women and two men died in the crash.

The bus driver and a guide were also injured in the accident.

Egyptian security officials said the injured Americans were immediately transferred to a military hospital for treatment.

The Great Temple at Abu Simbel was built during the reign of Ramesses II and was dedicated to the god Amun. It is considered one of the most beautiful ancient monuments in Egypt.

Road accidents are common in Egypt because of bad roads and poor enforcement of traffic rules, and crashes involving tour groups are not uncommon.

An estimated 6,000 people die in car accidents annually in Egypt.

India accident

The Press Trust of India news agency said 20 people were killed and another 14 people were injured on Saturday when a van collided with a bus near Indrium, a town in Uttar Pradesh state.

The news agency said the bus driver was among those killed, while one of the five seriously injured people died in the hospital on Sunday.

A police official said the van's driver lost control of the vehicle as it went through a mound of sand. It then crashed into the bus.

More than 110,000 people die each year in road accidents caused by speeding, bad roads, overcrowding and poor vehicle maintenance.

Ecuador bus

In Ecuador, officials said the death toll from the crash of an overcrowded bus that plunged into a ravine could increase further as some of the injuries sustained by 40 people were grave.

The bus ran off a foggy, rainy mountain road on Friday and rolled about 200 meters down hill before a tree stopped its fall.

Reuter agency official Abel Escobar on Saturday said that the vehicle had a capacity of 45, but 86 were on board, including the driver. There was also cargo such as sculptures AP

Strong quake in Pacific triggers small tsunami

SYDNEY—A powerful 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck off the western Pacific nation of Samoa on Sunday triggering a small tsunami nearby that swept after-quiet waves killed 220,000 people around the Indian Ocean.

The Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said the shallow quake generated a tsunami, but that the center expected a regional warning after the wave measured only 15 centimeters higher than normal in Hawaii.

"Sea level readings confirm that a tsunami was generated," the center said in its bulletin.

"The tsunami may have been destructive along coastlines of the region near the earthquake epicenter," it said but canceled the warning when no destructive waves hit.

The quake struck at 12:16 a.m. on Sunday (1:16 p.m. GMT Saturday), and the initial tsunami warning covered Vanuatu, Fiji and the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia. There were no reports of damage or casualties.

Jackie Philip, a member of staff at the Melanesian Port Vila Hotel in the Vanuatu capital, said the hotel was busy with last-night Christmas revelers when the quake struck.

"Some of us, we ran outside and stood and watched the sea for a few minutes but nothing happened. There is no damage and no injuries," he said, adding that no tsunami warning had been given on local radio.

A receptionist at Wet Nhe Grand Hotel called it a "small" earthquake, adding that calls to the international office were unanswered. Staff at the nearby Island Magic Hotel also said there had been no local tsunami warning.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said the quake was just 13.1 kilometers deep, and its epicenter was 165 km west of Isangel, on the island of Tanna—home to an active volcano—in the Vanuatu archipelago.

The USGS revised its initial readings for the magnitude and distance involved, after first recording the quake at 7.6.

At least a dozen aftershocks of magnitude 5.0 or greater hit the area after the main tremors occurring to USGS, including a powerful 6.2-magnitude shock some 12 hours after the initial quake.

A few hours after the Vanuatu tremblor, museum and glass stored domes near post-Christmas shoppers in a 6.9-magnitude earthquake rocked Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island on Monday.

No one was injured, but at least 20 buildings in the city's center were damaged by the tremblor, which scientists said was the latest of hundreds of aftershocks since a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Christchurch on Sept. 4. That quake caused extensive damage and a handful of injuries, but no deaths.

Scientists, which lies between Australia and north of New Zealand, is part of the "Pacific Ring of Fire"—an ocean-wide area often with seismic and volcanic activity caused by the grinding of enormous tectonic plates.

Since the deadliest quakes on the 26th anniversary of one of the worst natural disasters of modern times, when a huge tsunami triggered by an undersea quake off Indonesia killed more than 220,000 people around the Indian Ocean.

Since the disaster, which came with little or no warning for millions of coastal residents, regional governments deployed a string of monitoring buoys in the Indian and Pacific Oceans to help track of any abnormal waves. Reports from AFP and AP

Major winter storm barrels up East Coast

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—A winter storm that brought a rare white Christmas to parts of the South was barreling up the East Coast early on Sunday, with hammers producing 15 to 25 centimeters of snow for Washington and blizzard conditions for New York City and New England.

Airlines canceled hundreds of Sunday flights in the Northeast corridor, with more likely to come as the storm intensifies.

Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina declared states of emergency early on Sunday or Saturday night. As North Carolina road crews tried to clear snowy and icy highways, Mid-Atlantic officials spent Christmas Day preparing for up to 38 cm of snow, plunging temperatures and high winds.

Continental Airlines canceled 250 Sunday departures from Newark Liberty International Airport outside New York City. United Airlines announced late on Saturday that it had canceled dozens of Sunday departures from Newark, Philadelphia, New York's LaGuardia and JFK, Boston and other airports. AirTran also canceled flights, as did Southwest Airlines, mostly in or out of Washington Dulles, Baltimore and Newark.

Southwest spokesperson Brad Hawkins said most of the cancellations were for the afternoon, and that flights to New York and Boston would also likely to be affected. More decisions will be made on Sunday morning.

Most carriers were waiving fees for one-time changes to affected travel and urging passengers to make changes through websites.

The massive storm is the result of a low-pressure system that will intensify off the North Carolina coast on Sunday morning and strengthen into a major storm as it moves northeast, according to the National Weather Service.

A blizzard warning was issued for New York City for Sunday and Monday with a forecast of 20 to 40 cm of snow and strong winds that will reduce visibility in some spots at times. As much as 45 cm would fall on the New Jersey shore with wind gusts over 64 kilometers per hour. A blizzard warning was also in effect for Rhode Island and most of eastern Massachusetts including Boston.

Early Sunday, winter storm warnings covered northern Georgia, the Carolinas, Washington, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and the eastern sections of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York. Wind-driven snow was expected to reduce visibility to near zero in some areas. AP

BUNNIES IN MACAU

Playboy "bunnettes" serve an updated version of their signature outfit of bunny ears, fluffy cottontail, corset and cuffs at the 110 square-meter club atop the Sands hotel-casino in Macau. The bunnies—from the United States, Australia, Estonia, Hong Kong and Macau—serve drinks and chat with customers.

Unseasonable weather wreaks havoc in Moscow

MOSCOW—A power line fault was shut down Moscow's largest airport on Sunday in unseasonably warm weather produced half-storms that revealed havoc with the city's traffic and left shoppers slipping on ice.

Domodedovo International Airport, which handles a daily average of more than 35,000 travelers, reported a total power outage at around 8:00 a.m. (7:00 a.m. GMT).

An emergency power supply was allowed the airport to receive the approaching traffic but all arrivals and departures were cancelled two hours later, Itar-Tass reported.

Some 36,000 people were left stranded at the facility and airport officials said they did not expect the problems to be resolved before the evening.

The city's second largest airport Sheremetyevo was operating according to scheduled and expecting to pick up some of Domodedovo's arrivals.

Russian news reports said that similar outages had affected some 120 settlements around the city and other parts of several Russia, with more than 300,000 people left without electricity by midday. AFP

From Ninoy to Noynoy:
25 Years of the Philippine Daily Inquirer

From Ninoy to Noynoy: 25 years of the Philippine Daily Inquirer" chronicles the 25 years of Philippine history through the pages, photos, editorials and stories chronicled in the last quarter century's newspaper of record.

From the saga in the center, and the many stories in between, the Inquirer's 25th anniversary offering highlights the resilience and heroism of Filipinos through the widely lives of the Filipino decade-long, the heady days of EDSA People Power I, the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions of the 1990s to the second EDSA People Power at the turn of the century. It ends in the beginning, as the son of the woman whose husband's death sparked a founding heroism as the country's 15th president.

Alongside the history of the "democratic project," the book is also the story of the Inquirer, its struggles and its triumphs over the years. From a paper financed by a pawned engagement ring to a group of over a thousand professionals with a presence in print, broadcast, online and wireless.

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WORLDBRIEFS

Aid centers closed

KHAR—Food aid distribution centers have been closed temporarily in southwest Pakistan following a suicide bombing that killed 65 people outside a World Food Program depot, Shafiq Khan, an official involved in the food distribution project, said on Sunday the four relief centers in the Dalpir district had been shuttered following Saturday's attack. The World Food Program project in Baqir Saidi Provincial Bank of Pakistan has been displaced since early 2000 by fighting between the Pakistan military and tribal gangs. AP

Phone tap request

PASAY CITY—Pasaysayan President Ricardo Martinelli on Saturday denied reports from from a leaked US diplomatic cable suggesting he asked the US to help install phone taps on his political opponents, but he acknowledged a request for help against crimsuit and organized crime figures. A leaked US diplomatic cable from Aug. 22, 2004, quotes then US Ambassador Barbara Stephenson as saying the newly elected conservative president asked for help with wiretaps soon after he took office on July 1. AP

Failed rocket launch

NEW DELHI—A rocket carrying an Indian communication satellite exploded just after liftoff in the second launch failure for India's space agency this year. Television images showed the rocket exploding in smoke and fire just after it launched on Saturday from the Sriharikota space center in Andhra Pradesh state. It was carrying a GSAT-5P communication satellite into orbit. The vehicle developed an error 47 seconds after liftoff and lost command, leading to a higher angle in the flight. AP

Ivory Coast crisis

ABIDJAN—The main rebel refuses to leave Ivory Coast's presidency based over Bonalo Is to his grasp on power after regional leaders threatened to remove him by force if necessary. The United Nations' refugee agency said on Saturday that at least 10,000 have been fled the chaos of their homeland, looking for days to reach safety in Liberia. Diplomatic pressure and sanctions have hurt Laurent Gbagbo increasingly isolated though he has been able to maintain his rule nearly a month after the disputed vote because of the loyalty of security forces and the military. Even that, though, may disappear if he runs out of money to pay them. AP

Gaza firefight

GAZA CITY—Two rockets fired from Gaza landed in southern Israel on Sunday following a firefight in which two militants were killed. Hamas said it was "ready" for another war. The escalation of violence comes just ahead of the second anniversary of Israel's dismantling because of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and follows weeks of rocket fire from Gaza and a string of retaliatory Israeli air raids. Earlier on Sunday two Islamic Jihad militants were killed during an exchange of fire with Israeli soldiers on the border of Gaza, according to witnesses and the Al Quds brigade, a militant Islamist group. AFP

Dutch crackdown

AMSTERDAM—Dutch police have arrested 13 Somali men in the key port city of Rotterdam on suspicion of preparing a terrorist attack. One public prosecutor said. The men, aged 19 to 48, were detained on Friday on a tip from the intelligence services that they were planning an attack shortly in the Netherlands. There was no immediate information on the alleged target, but Rotterdam is Europe's biggest port and a hub of maritime commerce, with heaps of oil and gas storage facilities and dozens of massive docks. AP

Assange's book deals

LONDON—WikiLeaks chief Julian Assange said in an interview published on Sunday that he had signed deals for his autobiography worth more than one million pounds ($1.9 million). Assange told Britain's Sunday Times newspaper that the money would help him defend himself against allegations of sexual assault made by two women in Sweden. "I don't want to write this book, but I have to," he said. "I have already spent 200,000 pounds [in legal costs and] I want to defend myself and to keep WikiLeaks afloat." AFP

Hefner engaged

WASHINGTON—Hugh Hefner, the lascivious founder of Playboy, is taking the plunge again. Hefner, 84, said on Saturday via postings on Twitter that he and his girlfriend Crystal Harris, 22, got engaged on Friday. "When I gave her the ring, she burst into tears. This is the happiest Christmas weekend in memory," Hefner tweeted. Hefner, whose magazine was founded in 1953, was divorced from his second wife, Kimberley Conrad, earlier this year. He first married Millard Williams ended in divorce in 1958. Reuters

N. Korea boasts of artillery attacks on South

SEOUL—North Korean soldiers boasted on state television that they bombarded a front-line South Korean island with artillery last month as journalists scrutinized the South Korean military's response after the South fired first.

The two Koreas have ramped up their rhetoric since the Nov. 23 attack killed four South Koreans on Yeonpyeong Island near their tense western sea border. North Korea has said it fired after South Korean shells landed in its waters, while the South has said its marines firing drill aimed away from the sea frontier and should not have provoked an attack.

North Korea's use of words intensified around Saturday's 19th anniversary of leader Kim Jong-Il's appointment as the North's supreme military commander. Kim's military chief denounced last week in South a "sacred" nuclear war against the South.

On Friday, North Korean soldiers appeared on a state TV program marking Kim's appointment anniversary and bragged of participating in the artillery barrage.

"Our guns were full of fire right after we saw the enemy's shells being fired into our sacred waters," soldier Kim Hoon-chol said, describing his fists and mimicking a shoulder-to-shoulder with three uniformed colleagues. Their ranks were unknown.

"At the order of 'fire,' we poured our merciless thunderbolt of fire at the enemy," he said in a loud, oratory-style speech.

A soldier whose uniform was full of military decorations expressed loyalty to Kim Jong-Il.

"Hurting the enemy's provocation, we shouted, 'Let's dedicate our lives to fighting the enemy and giving down a merciless death for our dear leader and supreme military commander," Kim Kyong-su said.

Their speeches constantly drew applause from the audience—mostly uniformed soldiers who spoke separately and seemed to get laughter with South Korea. They all later sang a military song together.

South Korea has staged a series of military drills—including one on Yeonpyeong Island—in a show of force against the North. The South's President Lee Myung-bak, during a visit to front-line troops on Thursday, said that South Korea must make "unsparing" retaliation if it suffered another surprise attack.

South Korea plans new exercise naval firing exercises starting on Monday but said on Wednesday and other border islands, according to the defense ministry.

The stern-eye features for National Security Strategy in Seoul said in a report issued on Sunday that North may even invade Yeonpyeong and other fellow Sea border attacks next year, Yonhap news agency reported.

Yonhap said the assessment linked the North's belligerence to leader Kim's moves to transfer power to his youngest son but the report didn't elaborate. AP

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong-Il (right) and heir-apparent Kim Jong-un (left) pose with the state (now in Pyongyang on the occasion of the latter's birthday. AFP

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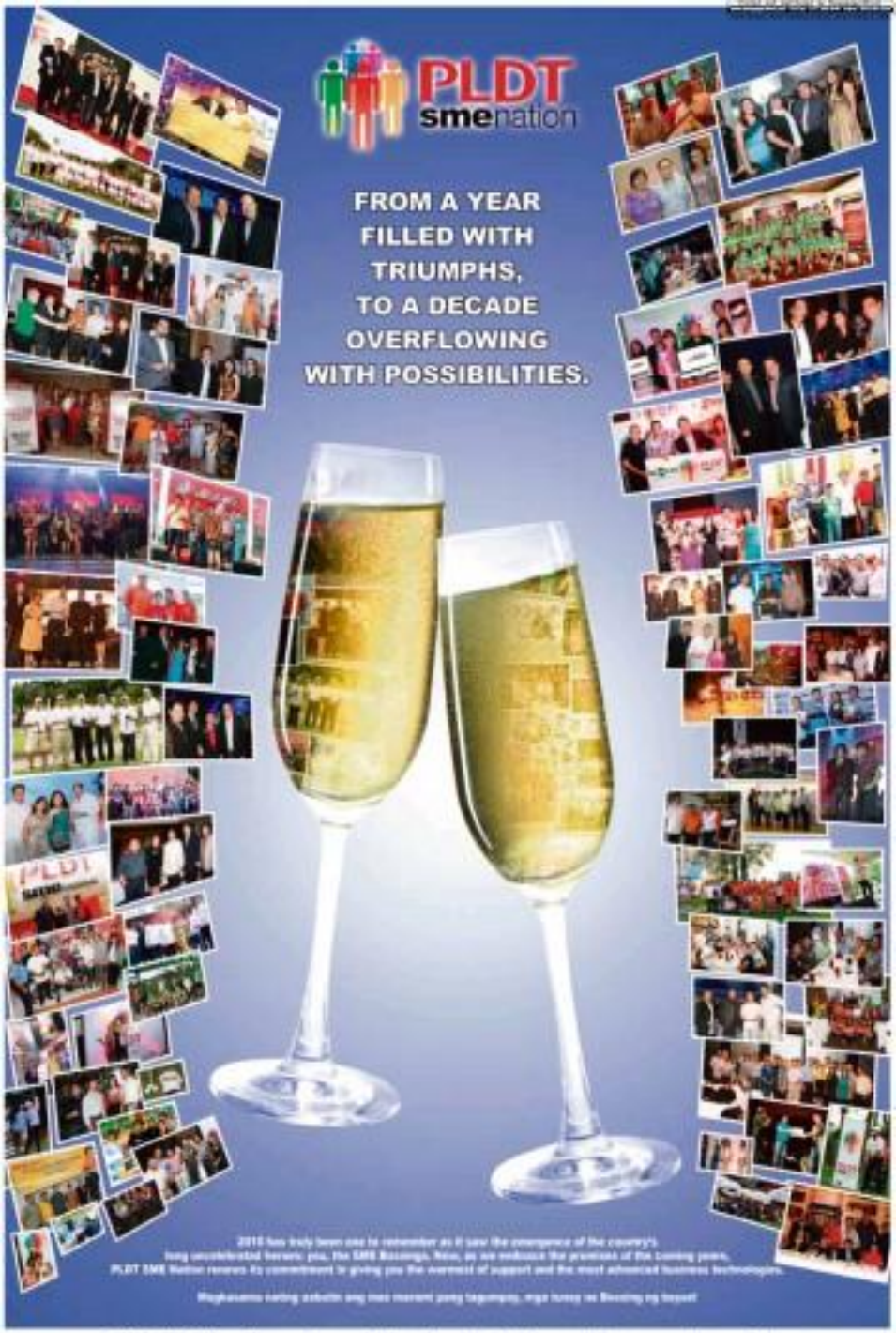

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Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

- Heat destroy LA Lakers; Kobe blasts teammates /A27

Alapag outshines Yap as Talk 'N Text downs Derby Ace

Texters take 1-0 semifinal lead

ANTIPOLO CITY—Jimmy Alapag pulled off a rare four-point play and prevented James Yap's marquee game from blowing Talk 'N Text away.

Alapag's two offensive gems sparked the Tropang Texters on a 98-91 win over the 6-Meg Derby Ace Llamados in Game 1 of their PBA Philippine Cup semifinal series last night at the Ynares Center.

Yap, the league's reigning MVP, unloaded 36 points as the Llamados rallied from 19 points down in the third.

But Jun when 8-Meg Derby Ace seemed ready to pull away for good, Alapag unloaded a triple from way out and got slipped by Jonas Villanueva on his way down.

Alapag, who led Talk 'N Text with 20 points, made the free throw to complete the four-point play and give the lead back to the Texters, 90-87.

A couple of minutes then dominated the Llamados, who played minus the injured Roger Yap and Rafi Reavis.

More than anything else, Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes attributed the victory to a stingy defense on guards RJ Nilsson and Jonas Villanueva.

"We knew James (Yap) will get his points no matter what so we focused on containing Simon and Villanueva," said Reyes.

Simon, 8-Meg's leading scorer, finished with 14 points while Villanueva had only three points in 31 minutes.

Charming set his best output in three years, Yap highlighted his scintillating production with four triples, the last moving the Llamados within 87-85 with three minutes to go.

"They are the defending champions. We know that they will fight back even when we're up by 10 points," said Reyes.

"Game 2 is on Wednesday (Dec. 25). But we'd rather not have this long break," said Reyes. "The longer the series goes, the bigger the chance for Roger Yap and Reavis to recover from their injuries.

"It is up to us to stay sharp during the break," said Reyes.

Kimbill Dr. Chumps scored 16 points in the second quarter that pushed the Tropang Texters to a double-digit lead at halftime.

Ryan Reyes and Kelly Williams then teamed up with Jared Dillinger and Harvey Carey in the third for a 10-point Talk 'N Text spread before Yap and Simon dropped away the deficit.

Simon's three-point play-off Reyes made it 69-73 but Carey's drive and a follow-up dunk after a miss by Williams allowed Talk 'N Text to regain momentum.

After Alapag's three and Carey's floater pushed the Texters ahead, 85-76, Yap sank five straight points, including a triple going into the half-way mark of the final period.

Villanueva's driving layup to Reyes Matthew broke the lane and Yap's long jumper over Reyes brought the Llamados back, 87-85, before Alapag completed a four-point play on the other end.

Matthew Joe the lonbon broke and Dionisio Cinco misfired a short one, and the Tropang Texters applied the finishing touches via JE Bolo's fast break and a split by Alapag from the charity stripe.

"That's what a team is. Every body steps forward when we're taking time outs," said Reyes.

GAMES FOR TODAY
Llamados Cabanatuan
7 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs 8-Meg Derby Ace
7:30 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Barangay Ginebra

TALK 'N TEXT'S Ali Peek rises to block a shot by Gerwin Saco of Derby Ace. AUGUST MIRANDILLA

ON AND OFF

Team owners to meet on coliseum project

By Ronnie Nathaniel

THE ON-AND-OFF plan by the Philippine Basketball Association to build its own multipurpose coliseum will soon be tackled by the team owners' honorables.

Saying that the current board of governors are not on a position to commit to the project one way or another, former PBA chair Ricky Vargas said the logical way is to let the owners decide the coliseum issue.

Vargas, who represented Talk 'N Text in the board, said commissioner Chito Salud "embraced the idea" and agreed to his suggestion to call an owners meeting, possibly in the third week of January.

Vargas added that PLDT-heart chair Manny Pangilinan, who owns the Talk 'N Text and Meralco teams, wanted to know "where is and who's cost" on the coliseum project and it was therefore necessary to get the team owners together.

San Miguel Corp. president Ramon Ang, thanks team owner Fred Uytengsu, Rain or Shine ex-owners Tony Que and Raymond Pe

PANGILINAN

VARGAS

ANG

UYTENGSU

and Barako Bull's George Chan had already agreed in the meeting, Vargas revealed.

He also stressed that he had no intentions of offending the current members of the board, noting that when he was the PBA chair, he himself couldn't really commit to a major undertaking that would cost a huge amount.

Meanwhile, Vargas said he had also discussed in a recent board meeting the formation of the Smart Gilas national team for tournaments in 2015 leading to the Fiba Asia Men's Championship which is the qualifying tournament for the 2016 London Olympics.

Among the options being studied is the formation of a hybrid team with the core of Smart Gilas reinforced by some PBA players.

Vargas said Talk N' Text "is willing to sacrifice" by allowing its key players to join the national line, whose campaign will be handcrafted by the SBP headed by Pangilinan.

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Fifa tells AFC chief: Keep off PFF row

By Cedrif P. Tupaz

THE INTERNATIONAL Football Federation (Fifa) is standing by its decision upholding the ouster of former Philippine Football Federation president Jose Mari Martinez by the PFF Congress despite the strong opposition of Mohamed bin Hammam, the powerful head of the Asian Football Confederation.

In a letter to Bin Hammam dated Dec. 23, a copy of which was obtained by the Tribune, Fifa president Sepp Blatter said he hopes the AFC and Martinez will respect the decision, which was affirmed by Fifa Associations Committee head Geoff Thompson.

Martinez was removed by 26 of the 33 voting members of the PFF Congress, which installed elected Mariano "Nonong" Araneta to finish Martinez's term until November 2011.

Blatter clarified that Fifa only wanted to maintain a status quo in a Dec. 3 letter to Martinez because it was subject to appeal before the Court of Arbitration for Sports in Switzerland.

"The situation was not clear whether the proposal of removing the president has been put properly in the agenda," Blatter said. "However, since the facts were available at Fifa, the chair of the Associations Committee was asked to give an opinion."

The Associations Committee, Blatter said, deals with relations between Fifa and its members, draws up proposals for optimum cooperation and also monitors the evolutions of the statutes and regulations of Fifa and its members.

Giving Thompson's opinion, Fifa general secretary Jerome Valcke recognized Araneta as the rightful president in a Dec. 20 communication.

Bin Hammam had challenged the Fifa decision, saying the action taken by Valcke violated a decision during a Dec. 18 meeting in the United Arab Emirates where the PFF situation was taken up.

The AFC president said he would join Martinez in challenging the decision in the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

Bin Hammam also accused Fifa of interfering in the upcoming AFC Congress, a claim vehemently denied by Blatter.

"There is no way any interference of Fifa in the coming AFC elections as there was also no Fifa interference with the 2009 AFC Congress," Blatter said.

Blatter said the PFF had every right to make his opinion on the leadership struggle.

"Since Fifa's 2006 members associations are direct members of Fifa, they also have the right to seek clarification and support of Fifa," Blatter said.

Martinez has remained defiant despite the Fifa decision.

"I cannot accept an illegal decision," he told the Inquirer in a telephone interview. "I will wait after the holidays to decide on my next move."

BLATTER

LEAPING COWBOY Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Sam Hurd (middle) leaps for a first down against the Arizona Cardinals in the third quarter during an NFL Christmas game. The Cowboys defeated the Cardinals, 27-26.

Buenafe, Lanete lead college awardees

By Cedrif P. Tupaz

FOR PROVIDING the offensive firepower talents their teams' needed it the most, Ateneo's Ryan Buenafe and San Beda's Garvo Lanete will be among the awardees in the Collegiate Basketball Awards on Jan. 27 in the Topaz 1 of the Gateway Business Cubao, Quezon City.

Buenafe, who helped fuel Ateneo past the Bulldogs 81 in the UAAP finals, and Lanete, the San Beda gunner who delivered the college blues for the Lions, will be given the "Dynasty Player" awards in the event by the UAAP-NCAA Press Corps, Inquirer Communications Inc.

Ateneo coach Norman Black and San Beda's Frankie Lim will also be feted during the ceremony for steering their squads to titles.

The event, also supported by Accel 365, IRISH, Fertilicious, Gatorade, San Miguel Corporation and the Philippine Sportswriters Association, starts at 7 p.m.

Fireman

Playing the Ateneo's role in the bid, Lanete helped quell a San Sebastian rally in the title-clinching game that also sealed an 18-game sweep of the season before a huge crowd at the Araneta Coliseum.

Lim has heaped praises on Lanete for raising big shots during their dominant campaign.

Lanete averaged 13.3 points, 6.8 rebounds and 3.3 assists for San Beda, which won its fourth title in the last five seasons and avenged their title loss to the Stags in 2008.

Buenafe had been ineligible in his first three years in the league, finally in the season, he was also criticized because of his weight, which observers believed had slowed him down. Against the Tamaraws, the former San Sebastian-bagger finally showed his mettle.

The 6-foot-2 Bianchi poured 20 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter, including triple with 23 seconds left and their shot clock winding down.

The UAAP-NCAA Press Corps will also award the Collegiate Mythical Team that will feature the five best players from both leagues this season, the UAAP and NCAA Juniors Player of the Year and the Super Senior-Award.

Leadership feud may pull PH football down

JUST WHEN we thought that the debilitating leadership squabble in the Philippine Football Federation had been resolved, we were disappointed to learn that the struggle is far from over.

The powerful presidents of the Asian Football Confederation Mohamad bin Hammam, who holds sway over 46 countries and whose country, Qatar, will play host to the World Cup in 2022, has questioned the actions of Fifa general secretary Jerome Valcke.

In addition, he has threatened to take ousted PFF president Jose Mari Martinez to arbitration before the Court of Arbitration for Sports in Switzerland.

At the heart of the controversy is the letter sent to Martinez and other key officials by deputy general secretary Jiberto Eustace Lua Dee, 3 where he upheld the presidency of Martinez, ending the year-long clear whether the election of Araneta was done properly.

He also maintained that Martinez and the executive committee members remain the only legitimate representatives of the PFF board.

Apparently, general secretary Jerome Valcke, unknowingly or otherwise, sent a letter dated Dec. 20 to PFF secretary general Ramon Mariel where he recognized the removal of Martinez and his replacement by Araneta.

Here's the problem. According to bin Hammam, they had a meeting at the UAE last Dec. 18 which Fifa presidential Sepp Blatter attended and where the PFF problem was taken up and a decision was reached.

The decision was to consult the Fifa legal committee and to have Fifa and the AFC send a delegation to Manila to verify the situation and take appropriate action.

It was also reportedly agreed to maintain the status quo and to convene a special congress within 90 days to elect a president.

Bin Hammam and Martinez are obviously banging on to what was agreed upon at that Dec. 18 meeting but there appears to be one loophole that may well be exploited by Martinez and Ateneista—the decision to consult the Fifa legal committee.

If this was done by Eustace and/or gather the legal committee had already ruled that the election of Araneta was in order, then that will surely be a powerful argument in his favor and for the reinstatement of Ateneo.

What pains us is that we have a situation where two former national players who were on the same team, are unable to get together and resolve their differences like members of one team and national Filipinos.

The current scenario is getting international governing bodies to intervene and decide for us in a pure injunction on the qualities of our so-called sports leaders.

Besides, it shows a terrible weakness entirely and invites interference in the affairs of our national sports associations as in the recent case of cycling and equestrian and before that billiards and basketball.

Sending a delegation from Fifa and AFC to verify the situation is not only a costly proposition we assume when both the costs, but it is also something that invites lobbying and campaigning to influence the visitors.

We've seen this happen before in basketball where personal ties and friendships were given more importance than the facts in hand. They also derailed perceptions of right and wrong.

Our hope is that, for the dignity of our country and the future of a sport that has won the hearts of millions of Filipinos, Martinez and Ateneista can get together and settle their differences amicably and with decency.

In the end, our country, its image abroad and football itself suffer because of the bickering. And if our people get sick of it, we may lose the chance of elevating the sport to heights of glory. That would be a crying shame.

Olivarez new Philta prexy

PARAÑAQUE REP. Edcel Olivarez, whose father served as long-time tennis chief and patron, was unanimously elected president of the Philippine Lawn Tennis Association last week at the Philta office inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The son of former Parañaque Mayor Nikki Olivarez and brother of former national team stalwarts Edsa and Rio Olivarez succeeded Jonne Poblis, president of Alabang Country Club.

Also, Poblis was elected vice president for juniors and the grassroots and Emilo Cuja administrator Randy Villanueva assumed VP for elite and UC affairs.

Ramon Magat was elected secretary general and Edna Olivarez-Nguyen was chairperson.

The board of trustees is composed of Randy Villanueva, Edwin and Pablo Olivarez, Magat, Nguyen, Poblis, Johnny Murfil Jr., Ramon Cauntero, former president and now PSC commissioner Buddy Andrada, Ernani Lopez and Manuel May.

The Philta takes pride in the country's entering its Group 1 status in the Davis Cup as a team built around Fil-foreign players Marcel Bitadal and Treat Huey.

A host of Fil-foreign runners are also bidding to join the national team this year headed by PCA Open champion Mare Siobar.

Philta will start the year with the Andrada Cup age-group tournament starting on Jan. 8.

Mary Anthony Reyes

Pritil dominates rich Philtobo Juvenile Classic

LUCKY SMOKIE Pritil lived up to his pre-race billing, posting a three-length victory in the P2.6-million Philtobo Grand Juvenile Championship, local racing's richest race for two-year-olds held yesterday at the Saddle and Cattle Country Club in Nasugbu, Batangas.

The handsome chestnut colt from the famed Esguerra Racing Stable, who was making only his second offical start after a maiden race victory over 1,200 meters barely two weeks ago, surprised everyone with his authoritative performance.

Expertly ridden by jockey Jonathan Hernandez, Pritil covered the 1,600-m race in a respectable 1:41.7.

The Jose Hernandez-trained gallop-or tracked pacesetter Charming Saint in second spot for majority of the distance before making his move in the final 400 meters.

Pritil easily outlasted the gritty Charming Saint, the third pick ridden by jockey Jeffrill Zarate, down the stretch to snatch the P1.56-million top prize.

Owned and bred by businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra, Pritil is by current hot sire Quaker Ridge out of former campaigner Archis Queen, a full-sister of Gluttonous champion Wind Shiver, by Maria.

He is also half-brother to stakes winners Pacmate and Queen of Queens, which were also bred and raced by Esguerra.

Another island-born colt, Prince Isah, made his bid from the inside rail but was simply not up to the task and settled for third, well clear of 18 Skinny, which salvaged fourth spot.

Completing the order of finish in the race were stablemates Gaudang Pinay and Seiong Pinoy followed by Eha Na Ito, Bingo and Hermie. Having Rumbo, was a late withdrawal.

Pritil's impressive showing re-stalled him as contender for the year's three-year-old division honors and possibly an early track favorite for next year's Triple Crown series.

The victory also preserved Esguerra's stranglehold of the Philtobo Juvenile crown, which was won last year by another Hermie Sons-bred colt Carmela.

ALCALA II-19

Ming-Victor PH Badminton Open reels off

WITH THE top seeds downing opening day foes, the tennis lights take the limelight today when the Ming Hamesa Victor National Open and Youth Badminton Championships gets going at the Club 456 Badminton Center in Lilo, Quezon City.

Elimination round matches in the boys and girls' singles and doubles events in the Under-11, U-13, U-15, U-17 and U-19 categories are on tap in the first two days of the four-day championships featuring the country's top and rising badminton players who are also chasing berths in the national pool.

Marlea Esperon, Kevin Cordiamat and Yeo Tabanclai, who share the fifth ranking in the boys' U-19 class, open their respective bids against Lee Tabanclai, Andrea Rigonan and Joshua Monteverde, all looking for a win and a spot in the Last 16.

Top seed Joper Escuera and No. 2 Peter Magnaye draw boys and will see action in the second round.

Top ranked Mahfooz Ahsda, who at 11 feat is tipped to dominate the U-19 girls singles, and second seed Danica San Ignacio also gained automatic seats in the quarterfinals while third ranked Janelle de Vera and Anna Rowena take on Lia Dizon and Jill Rhiziane, respectively.

Other players fancied to contend for the titles in the event organized and conducted by the Philippine Badminton Association (PBA) are Wadi Hernando and Cassandra Lim (girls U-17), Lim and Kayden de Jesus (U-15), Siva Alfio and Eleanor Idaya (U-13), Alderen Concepcion and Jolliene de Leon (U-11), Kenneth Montevallano and Ernest Idaya (boys U-17), Joshua Abenoza-han and Carlo Feroz (U-15), Mark Ahsda and Dennis Lee (U-13), Daniel Bugain and Phelix Angalot (U-11).

PBA president and former Hon. Lady Amelia "Ming" Hamesa will make the ceremonial serve along with other guests, kicking off the event sanctioned by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and the Badminton Asia Confederation (BAC).

Streak-busting Magic halt Celts

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—Orlando rallied from a 12-point second-half deficit Saturday to beat Boston, 86-78, and end the Celtics' 14-game NBA winning streak.

Brandon Bass scored 22 points and Herb Turkoglu chipped in 16 for the Magic, who followed up their Thursday triumph over NBA leaders San Antonio—which ended the Spurs' 13-game winning streak—with a victory over another elite team.

Jameer Nelson and Al Horford delivered key jumps down to the final minutes for the Magic, who engineered a trace of Celtics-esque toughness Saturday in a bid to bolster their staggering backcourt.

"You are what the possibilities are," Magic coach Stan Van Gundy said of his new-look lineup. "You see that you have a chance to be a really good team. We're not there yet by any means, but you have a chance to be a very good team.

Kevin Garnett scored 22 points for Boston and Paul Pierce added 16, but it wasn't enough for the Celtics to overcome the team they defeated in last season's Eastern Conference finals.

It was Boston's first defeat since they fell to Toronto on Nov. 21.

"I just thought we were away from scoring efficiently and we just didn't get any single downs the streak," Pierce said.

For much of the contest the Celtics dictated, with Magic center Dwight Howard in foul trouble over the first three quarters and Nelson without a field goal until the final period.

In the first minute of the fourth quarter Howard's hook shot over Glen Davis increased Boston's lead to four points.

Instead, plays later, Howard drew a sixth foul on Celtics center Shaquille O'Neal when he fell to the court in the two fought for position.

"I didn't flop," Howard insisted. "I just tripped."

Bass's layup tied it with 5:36 to play Howard the score at 77-77. Nelson followed with a three-pointer and Bass dunked a jump shot as the Magic pulled away.

Orlando was struggling when they put together two tracks last weekend, bringing Gilbert Arenas from Washington and Jason Richardson, Turkoglu and Earl Clark from Phoenix.

ORLANDO Magic center Dwight Howard (back) blocks an underpeal attempt by Boston Celtics center Glen Davis. AFP

They gave up Rashard Lewis, Vince Carter, Mikhail Pietrus and Marcin Gortat along with a 2011 first-round draft selection and cash in the process. AFP

NY Knicks trip Bulls; Thunder triumph

NEW YORK—Amare Stoudemire and Raymond Felton each scored 28 points, and the New York Knicks limited the Chicago Bulls to two baskets in the first 10 minutes of the fourth quarter, pulling away for a 103-95 victory Saturday.

Shooting 6-for-6 and picking off passes with a dominant defense, New York didn't allow a field goal for more than eight minutes after the game was tied early in the first period.

"We did a beautiful job collectively," Stoudemire said. "They're a really good defensive team, but for us, we've been talking about defense now for the past—actually the whole year—but more so the past week about communicating, helping the helper, so it's really clicking."

Wilson Chandler and Danilo Gallinari added 15 apiece for the Knicks, the NBA's highest-scoring team but 20th in defense. Yet it's been hard to tell lately they struggle on that end, as they held Oklahoma City to 99 points on Wednesday and followed by blocking 10 shots and scoring up with 12 steals in this one.

Stoudemire anchored the defensive effort, grabbing 13 rebounds and blocking six shots. Rookie Landry Fields finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks, who improved to 21-25 on Christmas. Felton had 12 assists and Chandler also grabbed 11 boards.

Wearing Christmas colors, the Knicks beat Orange for the second time this season, winning the series for the first time since 2000-01.

"It's real important because we're cheapskates. Hopefully we can do that," Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni said. "One thing is you know we play three more games. We were not as we get the defenders, to now that helps."

Carlos Boozer had 18 points and 15 rebounds for the Bulls.

In Oklahoma City, MVP scoring leader Kevin Durant had a season-high 41 points—21 in the third quarter—for as the Thunder turned back the Denver Nuggets, 114-106.

It the Thunder's first Christmas game. Denver was 14 of 20 from the field and ruined his scoring average to 28.3. James Harden added 21 points for the hosts.

Denver played for the second straight game without star Carmelo Anthony following his sister's death Wednesday. Chauncey Billups led the Nuggets with 30 points.

In Oakland, Golden State scored 11 straight points to erase a six-point deficit in the fourth quarter and top Portland, 109-102. AP

Heat destroy LA Lakers; Kobe blasts teammates

LEBRON James and the Miami Heat celebrate Christmas Day by running over Kobe Bryant and the Los Angeles Lakers. AP

LOS ANGELES—LeBron James and Kobe Bryant can finish ennuiller while they jogged downcourt, not quite making eye contact during an unpleasant conversation in the closing minutes.

That asked him what he got for Christmas," James said.

Although the two superstars wouldn't reveal what reign worth they exchanged, it wasn't tough to pick out a few statements himself.

James had 27 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists while hitting a season-high five three-pointers, and the Miami Heat shrugged off the Christmas Day stage to a 96-80 victory at the Staples Center.

Although both teams exited the game a television curiosity online than a prime-time NBA finale preview, it clearly meant something to James, who had his third triple-double with Miami and the 22nd of his career.

James also completed Bryant, who scored 37 points, in his second straight Christmas win in the Lakers' home arena, following last season's victory in the LeBron's Cavaliers.

"We're not trying to make a statement to anyone," James said. "We're trying to show each other that we can play at a high level, and we've got better every game. This is one game. We're happy because we got better today."

While the Heat realize Bosses and Orlando are much more important, shoulder to check championship hopes, and while the Lakers don't get terribly excited about playing anybody until they play, this game was a palpable edge in the crowd at Staples Center for this interconference matchup—and the Heat's steady defensive effort fastened the Lakers in the second half.

Chris Bosh had 24 points and 13 rebounds, Dwyane Wade added 18 points on a sore knee and the Heat won for the 14th time in 15 games while flattering the two-time defending champions into a terrible offensive performance, starting with Los Angeles' 24-point first quarter.

"Any whole thing is just playing solid defense the whole game," Bosh said. "That's the primary part of our identity."

James played a balanced, patient game, even after a technical foul was halftime for an under-the-basket scuffle with Lakers defensive stopper Ron Artest. James' teammates ran without enough to keep the Heat comfortably ahead, with Bosh playing the entire first half and Mario Chalmers contributing 13 points in a reserve role, including three three-pointers.

"Ultimately it's probably the most usual and the most point we've played [well] this season," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said.

The Lakers scored 17 points for the Lakers, who fell behind early and never sought up to the tantalizing new contenders for their title. Although Bryant never quite gave them for the holiday, his Lakers simply didn't raise their games to meet the spotlight that follows Miami. Bryant's self-belief in the first half and never making a run.

Bryant, who picked up his third technical foul in two games, ran sizzly displeased with his teammates throughout the second half.

"It's like these games mean more to our opponents than they do to us," Bryant said. "I think we need to get that straight—play with more focus, put more [emphasis] on these games. I don't like it. We know what we're capable of doing, and that's part of the problem.

"Individually, you have to make that decision on what's important," Bryant said. "The point is, we're the most important thing. This is serious stuff. You don't just have two stops and say 'That's enough. We're satisfied with what we've got.' I'm not going to let that slide." AP

DEEP-POCKET HOSTS

Sporting roads lead to the Gulf

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—It was hardly a marquee moment in the history of world sports. Cricketers from a Middle Eastern beach watched events that included horse riders sliding a lemon with a tassel and a cousin of croquet called woodball.

Yet there was the president of the International Olympic Committee, Jacques Rogge, basking on front the VIP seats and then posing about to present prize medals at the Asian Beach Games in Oman earlier this month.

If Rogge seemed out of place, he wasn't. The scene was just a sign of the times. Asia can expect more—perhaps many more—such courtesy calls to the Gulf by the world's leaders of international sports as the money-soaked region that once begged for attention from the IOC and others is now bursting with eager suitors.

They are emissaries along the new silk road of sports. In little more than a decade, the Gulf's wealth and boundless ambitions have lured big-name events and their referees, while the region's business have developed a reputation as deep-pocket hosts—who can still hungry for more.

"We go to new lands," Fifa president Sepp Blatter said Dec. 2 after announcing they Qatar's surprise selection for the 2022 World Cup.

Then critics got busy. A running theme, predictably in the sweaty-up hidden hosting, was a shrill retort: How does Qatar outdo one of oversee jewels of international sport?

Such comments just mean the questioner hasn't been paying attention.

The sports competition in the Gulf has been going on for years—part of a new world landscape of sports to which Europe and North America is outdone where authorities are Rafael Nadal, Tiger Woods and roaring F1 races as something more.

In the Gulf, it's a way to counter beyond just being the world's first pump.

"The old thinking in the Gulf was to try to stay out of sight," said Patrick Nikolas Thomas, a former US ambassador in Qatar and currently president of the US-Qatar business council. "Now they see sports as an effective way to make Qatar and other Gulf countries important and important to other people."

The Gulf strategy to buy respectability takes other forms. But sports adds some of the Gulf's favorite ingredients: Celebrity and opulent.

And Dubai is cuddling a race at a far bigger prize—the 2018 Olympics. AP

WIGGINS

No surprise that Jordan wants winning team

CHARLOTTE BOBCATS owner Michael Jordan's reconstruction of the services of coach Larry Brown brought to surface some interesting revelations.

The Bobcats, despite making the playoffs last year, were a dismal 9-18 at the time of Brown's departure. Now it's easy for some to judge that Jordan was successful to his decision and that he could have cut his fellow North Carolina alum some slack. Others may even say that Jordan is a difficult boss to work for having been a reluctant himself.

The reconstruction was a basketball decision. Jordan and Brown are two of the smartest basketball men on the planet and both can sense when a change should be made. But the Jordan move is not only about ending a relationship with a employer and starting a new and hopefully more beneficial one with another coach or executive. It's all about making tough decisions and doing what's best for the team. And being such a won-positive person, Jordan wants to win and will do what he has to.

In the properly worded press statement, both Jordan and Brown agreed that it was time for a change. When those situations crop up, it's usually a case of players no longer listening to their coach and that there is a need for a new voice to start tuning in their ears.

But life in the NBA goes on differently compared to those we read relationships with coaches here at home. Our arguments are often built with tons of drama and actuations to get the real score. Often, there is no clear announcement why a team and that simply a parting of ways has been achieved.

The success of an NBA franchise depends on team performance. If you have a winning team that plays its guts out every night, you will get a reasonable following that will keep coming in droves. Losses and inactivities. The community values the team from

ONE GAME AT A TIME

Jose Santacruz

sell-fund its support during and after games.

We saw this in Atlanta when the Hawks enjoyed boisterous support from loyal fans on their opening home game. The Hawks had a run in the playoffs last year and made an exciting team that merits crowd support. The games gimmicks and giveaways are enjoyed when the fans back a team that fights for them.

Neal Silas has been appointed interim coach and his immediate task is to get the Bobcats back on the soccer and on the negotiating table. The Bobcats need some deft trading moves to make substantial lineup changes for the remainder of the season and the future.

Jordan needs a team not only to keep the people from an investment standpoint but also to fulfill his urge to win. Part of the deal is making a coaching change if he has to even if Brown himself is a winner with an NBA and NCAA title and has turned around some of the teams he has worked for.

In the NBA, it's not only the amazing that happens but the real and painful as well.

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa
Associate Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

Pacquiao top story in boxing

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

POPULAR SPORTS magazine and website Sports Illustrated named the exploits of Manny Pacquiao as the biggest boxing story for 2010, a milestone for the online edition packed smoothly.

"He's won major sanctioning body in six eight different weight classes, nearly half of the sport's 17 divisions," wrote Bryan Armen Graham on SI's Inside Boxing. "He was the subject of a 60 Minutes profile in November, less than 12 months after being named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people."

Pacquiao fought more this year, opening up 2010 by dominating Andrea Clottey at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas before annexing the WBC super welterweight crown with a 12-round annihilation of Mexican Antonio Margarito.

The victory over Margarito were all spent a year after Pacquiao stopped Miguel Cotto in the 12th round of their WBO welterweight title, giving the 10-time ring icon an unprecedented seventh world title in seven divisions.

And also in the midyear national elections, Pacquiao won a seat in Congress, representing Sarangani province.

"He was elected to Congress in the Philippines in May and named Fighter of the Decade by the Boxing Writers Association of America in June," wrote Graham. "He won two more fights at Cowboys Stadium for a record-setting $32-plus-million gross, a North Texas football game during the whole 2010 season. He sings, he acts."

It seems Pacquiao has indeed run out of things to conquer, as results so far for 2011, with the fight against Floyd Mayweather still unclear, the Bureau will not sanction any fight against aging Oscar Dela Hoya.

Pacquiao's drawing power also helped boxing resurrect big-stadium fights, a storyline that also made it to SI's top boxing stories at No. 5.

"When Pacquiao fought Josh Clottey at Jerry Jones' $1.3 billion Cowboys Stadium in March, the official attendance was 50,994—greater than any fight in the United States over the past 50 years besides Ali-Spinks II at the Superdome in 1978 (63,350) and Whitaker-Chavez at the Alamodome in 1993 (50,000)," Graham wrote.

This marks the second time the country made it to the yearend list of Sports Illustrated.

Earlier, the website ranked the dubsh, the Philippine football team, No. 10 in its list of top football stories for the year.

The national footballers secured the silsilah after a surprising run to the semifinals of the AFF Suzuki Cup, which included a 2-0 victory over defending champion Vietnam. The dubsh lost in the semifinals to the semifinals, but not after a strong stand against the regional heavyweight.

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Editor Raul G. Manuelo ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

VIRFLEX vSystem 4.1

Ayala eyes stake in railway rehab

PNR project to benefit group's property ventures

By Paolo G. Marcelino

THE AYALA group is looking at a possible involvement in the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Railway (PNR) service to Southern Luzon, which can benefit the company's several property developments in the area.

PNR General Manager Junio Ragragio said Ayala Corp. has expressed interest to participating in the development of the PNR line, which ran directly link the Makati-centered business district to suburban communities being developed by the company in areas in Laguna.

The PNR service, which will stretch all the way to Bicol from Metro Manila, will make Tutuban, the residential community developed by Ayala subsidiary Ayala Land Inc. to Sta. Rosa, Laguna, more accessible.

"They came to me and they expressed interest to develop the southern lines until Legaspi City in Bicol," Ragragio said in a recent interview.

"It's logical for them to participate in the development of that corridor. They have a lot of developments near the PNR line," he added.

The government is currently studying on rescuing the PNR passenger train line in Bicol. A separate "spur line" to Batangas is also being planned to improve the movement of cargo from the Batangas port to Manila.

Ragragio said the PNR management was also currently developing a nationwide "master plan" for the train system. This will include plans to have a train service all the way up to Tagaytay area and other Southern Luzon provinces.

Train lines for cargo and passengers will also be built to

(SEE PAGE B3)

DOTC says Panglao still best location for airport

By Reena V.M. Domingo

DESPITE OPPOSITION by civil society groups, the Department of Transportation and Communications is keen on building a new international airport on Panglao Island instead of any other location in Bohol as based on requirements of navigational safety.

Rolando G. Tungcahan, deputy director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said in an interview that the DOTC was reviewing the feasibility studies on the proposed airport—something that critics and even Vice Bohol have asked to be done.

"The review is ongoing but as of today, [the DOTC] believes Panglao is the best possible location for the airport," Tungcahan said. "It has something to do with the terrain and wind patterns."

Even then, Tungcahan—who is responsible for investment programming—said there was no final and definite decision on the location yet.

In 2009, the National Economic and Development Authority's investment coordination committee-Cabinet committee gave the green light to the proposed increase in the cost of the Panglao Island airport development project.

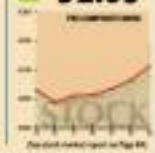
Changes in the design, increased prices of needed supplies and the acquisition of an additional 16.5 hectares of land pushed up the project cost to P7.54 billion, or 76 percent more than the original P4.27 billion.

(SEE PAGE B6)

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Dec. 23, 2010
44.040

STOCK MARKET
Dec. 23, 2010
52.35



Window-dressing seen to lift stocks

GAINS EQUITY MARKET momentum has picked up in the local stock market ahead of the long weekend holiday break last week in keeping with the seasonal "Santa Claus" rally.

Assuming that no untoward incident happens in the external environment, dealers said the market might continue to inch up due to yearend window-dressing activities.

On Thursday, the last trading day of the pre-Christmas weekend, the main share Philippine Stock Exchange index added 52.35 points or 1.21 percent to close at 4,166.24. For the whole week, the index rose 157.73 points or 3.9 percent.

Dealers said the buying momentum might be sustained in the next few days but the biggest risk seen may still the external environment.

Gloria C. Ramolete

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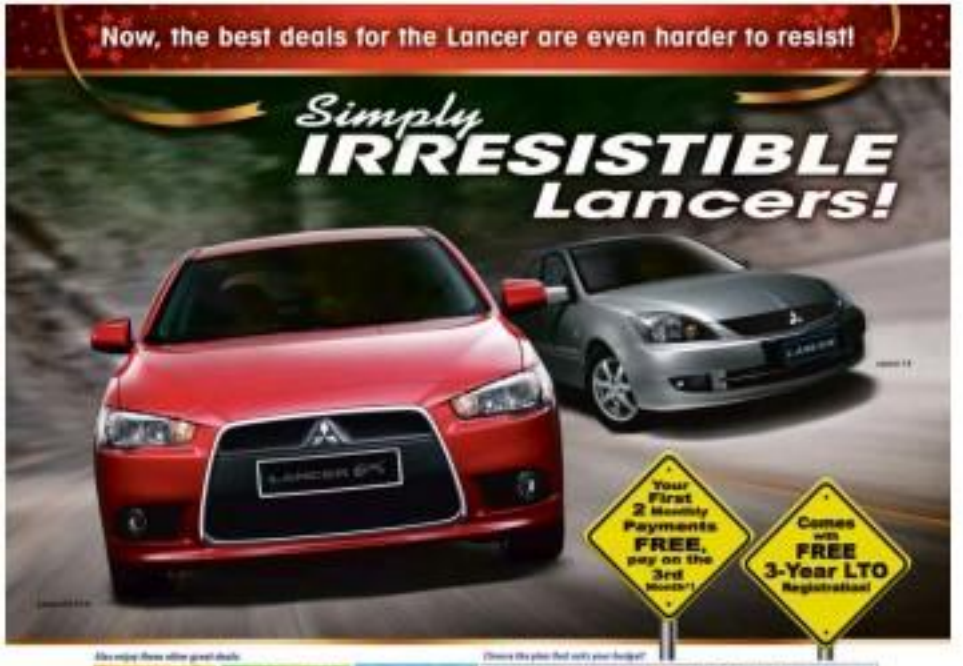

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	DP				
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Lancer GS 2.0 GLS M/T	148,320	25,812	10,980	13,878	15,489
Lancer GS 2.0 GLS CVT	162,870	28,983	10,980	15,846	16,346
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Synergy in show biz

BIZ BUZZ
By the staff

AFTER Manuel V. Pangilinan "diversified" out of his boat-race sports life into cinema screenplay-making, Ramon Ang Sr. is now dabbling in show biz, too, first by naming, directing, as much less, writing his script.

"Big Boy," ajan's from a recent hold-foray into the parent-mountain business, is also "diversifying" quite a bit into the entertainment industry, as the tycoon-cum-fly is teaming up with Vivo Films big boss Vic del Rosario to bankroll a series of films starring actress-lover Lucy Torres-Gomez.

Ang's first outing, tentatively titled "Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin Ko" (You Are the Only One I Will Love), is also "diversifying" quite a bit

Current account at a surplus

Capital/financial account recovers from 2009 deficit

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY saw a respectable growth in its current and capital/financial accounts in the third quarter due to a rise in foreign currency inflows, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has reported.

The current account, which covers net inflow of export earnings, remittances and service income, stood at a surplus of $617 billion in the three months to September—up 41 percent from $1.9 billion in the same period last year.

"There was a broad-based improvement across all the sub-components of the current account," the BSP said in its balance of payments (BOP) report for the third quarter of 2010 released Thursday.

The BSP said there had been a steady increase in remittances from overseas Filipino workers, investments in the country's business process outsourcing industry and export revenues.

"[Rise in remittances] reflected the continued preference for the skills and competencies of Filipino workers, combined with expanding international remittance transfer networks of bank and non-bank channels," the central bank said in the report.

The current account in the third quarter brought the surplus in the first nine months of the year to $7 billion, up by 121 percent from $6.2 billion in the same period last year.

Also, the country's capital and financial account—which covers net inflows of foreign direct investments and foreign portfolio investments—registered a surplus of $1.2 billion in the third quarter. This was higher by 40 percent from the $864 million seen in the same period last year.

"A confluence of factors in the domestic front helped boost investor sentiment, notwithstanding global concerns on the health of advanced economies," the BSP said.

Inflows of foreign portfolio investments grew sharply amid bullish outlook of foreign investors on developing Asian economies, including the Philippines.

Extremely low interest rates in the United States and Europe likewise prompted investors to shift funds to the Philippines and other emerging markets.

The capital and financial account surplus in the third quarter brought the figure for the first nine months of the year to $1 billion—a turnaround from the $1.7 billion deficit reported in the same period last year.

Port agency reports rise in cargo volume

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE VOLUME of cargo that had been shipped in and out of the country's ports grew by more than a tenth in the first three quarters of the year, reflecting the improvement in domestic and international trade.

In its latest quarterly report, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) said the increase helped drive up the regulator's earnings during the period.

Total cargo throughput reached 123.8 metric tons in the nine-month period. This is 12.48 percent up year-on-year.

Foreign cargo shipped in and out of the country accounted for about 86 percent of this volume. Cargo moved within the country accounted for the rest.

"There was a significant improvement in foreign container traffic, which increased remarkably by 22.21 percent," the PPA said. "Likewise, domestic container traffic went up by 8.04 percent."

"Significant increases in volume of cargo handled were recorded ... in Tanbourgo (161.27 percent), San Fernando (758.44 percent), Subic (27.93 percent), Tacloban (21.63 percent), Cotabato (27.35 percent), Iloilo (26.36 percent), Puerto Princesa (25.11 percent), and the Manila International Container Terminal (23.1 percent)," the PPA said.

The increase is expected to a sharp rise in the PPA's profit, which came in at just below P3 billion. The agency recorded its P021.83 million target by 113.97 percent.

Port revenue grew by 19.28 percent to Ph.113 billion.

The agency also reported that its expenses fell. Inflow target for the nine-month period. The PPA said operating expenses reached P3.980 billion, or 8 percent lower than the ceiling of P4.1.91 billion.

Although the PPA managed to keep expenses well below target, expenses still went up by 32.39 percent from last year's P2.92 billion.

"This is largely due to increases in repairs and maintenance and dredging costs," the regulator said.

As a government-owned corporation, the PPA will have to remit bulk of its earnings to the government, which is now trying to rein in the budget deficit.

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In 2011, listed firm Phoenix eyes a follow-on offering

By Amy R. Remo

PUBLICLY LISTED Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc. said on Thursday that its board of directors had approved the conduct of a follow-on offering sometime next year to raise the capital it would need.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Phoenix said that its board likewise authorized management to set the terms and conditions of the follow-on offering, including the appointment of a lead underwriter and issue manager.

"Pursuant to the rules and guidelines of the exchange and the Securities and Exchange Commission, the board of directors has further determined that the consent and approval of the stockholders be obtained through written assent. Thus, all stockholders of record as of Jan. 31, 2011 shall be entitled to submit to said date respective vote on the said matter," the company added.

Phoenix declined to release additional details about the planned offering.

Company CFO Jojo Ong explained that the company was looking at various options to raise capital, including looking for new investors.

"We're studying the option of either borrowing or raising equity," Ong said.

"We're talking with the banks, considering the growth in requirements. We're renegotiating with the banks to reconsider our loans."

Phoenix earmarked P1.5 billion for its 2011 capital expenditure program, hoping to expand its fuel supply operations and to roll networks across the country.

It also hopes to build expansion of its depot facilities. The P1.5 billion allocated for next year was much higher than the P800 million that Phoenix had programmed for 2010.

Last September, Phoenix was able to raise some P500 million from the issuance of preferred shares.

Make payment cards work to your advantage.

Debit and credit cards offer a safe and convenient alternative to cash. Both can be used to make purchases but each of these cards offer exclusive benefits. The key is to make them work to your advantage.

The start of the New Year is when you usually plan your budget for the rest of the year. It's inevitable that you'll do some shopping, dining and traveling and for these purchases, you'll most likely whip out a card. But which one should you use, a debit card or a credit card? More importantly, do you know the difference between the two?

Debit cards are ideal for purchases at convenience stores, fast food outlets or the internet and give you the convenience of making quick purchases without the hassle of looking or waiting for change. What's more, a monthly statement helps you keep track of your spending. And because purchases are deducted directly from your savings or checking account, there are no interest charges.

On the other hand, a credit card is a type of payment card with a revolving line of credit granted to the cardholder. It can be used for big-ticket items such as travel tickets and accommodations, shopping or paying for day-to-day purchases. It also allows you to earn points which can be used to redeem exciting rewards items. Credit cards provide flexibility by allowing you to pay your bill in full or by installments across a period of time. Should you choose not to pay your bill in full each month, you will be required to make a minimum payment and pay finance charges on the remaining balance. The finance charge includes interest, service transaction fees and other fees charged on the loan.

Because of all of these debit or credit card has a MasterCard logo, you can use it at all establishments accepting MasterCard worldwide.

To know more about debits, credits and other financial tools that will help you manage your finances better, turn to MasterCard Priceless Planner. It's a personal finance management website designed to help Filipino consumers better manage their personal finances. The website, www.mastercard.com.ph/pricelessplanner, offers a suite of financial tools to help consumers save well and spend wisely.

MasterCard Priceless Planner has resources, tips and links with helpful guides and informative videos on how to manage debts, plus for your retirement or save effectively. Best of all, anyone, not just licensed card holders, can benefit from this website.

Priceless Planner contains eight insightful sections: Video Primers, Priceless Planner, Payoff Accelerator, Savings Target, Retirement Calculator, Credit FAQ, Debit FAQ and Financial Glossary.

The Video Primers section features a catalog of short videos created to educate consumers about payment cards (credit, debit and prepaid cards) and how you can be smarter with your money. Some of the featured topics on the website include fraud prevention, MasterCard security and consumer protection.

The Purchase Power tool on MasterCard Priceless Planner empowers you to allocate your finances more effectively. It features a cash flow calculator that tells you how much money you can spend right now or maybe set aside for a future purchase. An honest assessment of your cash flow is the best way toward smarter spending and savings.

To help you pay off your debt effectively, use the Payoff Accelerator tool. It can aid you in creating a payment plan that shows you how much money you can save when you make payments above the regular amount due. You'll be surprised at how much you can save on a loan just by paying a little more now.

Saving money can be challenging, especially if you do not know how or where to begin. With the Savings Target tool, you'll know how much you need to regularly set aside so you can afford what you want, what you want it. Remember that putting money away in an interest-bearing account can help you reach your goal sooner. That's because compound interest can make your money work harder for you.

Are you prepared for retirement? With Retirement Calculator, you can have a snapshot on how to reach your retirement goal and savings. So when it's finally time for you to leave all your work behind, you can enjoy all the things that matter to you most.

Aside from these, Priceless Planner also features a credit FAQ section to give consumers a better understanding of credit. It features answers to tough questions about getting a personal information, credit rights and managing debt.

On the other hand, the debit FAQ section provides answers to frequently-asked questions about debit. These answers address basic questions such as how to set and follow a budget, to offering financial advice on when to seek for professional help or file for bankruptcy.

Finally, a Financial Glossary is included in the website for your easy reference to explain the unfamiliar financial terms used. This section features helpful definitions of general credit terms as well as explanations for terms that are applied exclusively to MasterCard cards.

Arming yourself with ample financial know-how will certainly help keep your finances in order. With MasterCard Priceless Planner, steering yourself to a financially savvy you becomes easier and more convenient.

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Meralco targets to bring down system losses below 8.5% cap

12-month average seen at 7.7%

By Amy R. Remo

POWER DISTRIBUTOR Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) targets to bring down further its system losses to less than the current cap of 8.5 percent as it continues to intensify its loss reduction initiatives and pilfering management.

"We're hoping to continue to be at levels below the regulatory set rate of 8.5 percent and anytime we're below that [level], it translates to savings for consumers," said Oscar S. Reyes, senior executive vice president and chief operating officer of Meralco.

In Tax, Meralco has already breached its 27-year, record-high system loss level of 7.7 percent, which was below the 8.5 percent system loss cap imposed on it by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

Mr. Reyes explained that the system loss cap enforced by the ERC is beyond which a utility is no longer allowed to recover from its customers the cost of electricity that was either lost in transmission through power lines or pilfered.

The company's 12-month moving average of 7.7 percent was considered low particularly for Meralco's franchise area, which Reyes described as "complex" since it serves more than 4.9 million customers. It was also an improvement from the 8.81 percent in system losses that Meralco incurred last year.

According to Reyes, Meralco has been investing heavily in new distribution facilities and other equipment, as well as in maintenance and system loss reduction programs. The distribution utility, he added, continues to work with local government units and the local police to address other concerns such as pilferages.

Meralco had said that all its measures geared toward decreasing its system losses "serve to complement the increase in volumes of energy sold to industrial customers resulting in sustained improvement in system loss performance. Large industrial customers are typically served at higher voltages, thus bringing down overall technical losses."

The country's biggest power distributor earlier said it wanted to complete by the end of the year 12 electric capital or service improvement projects worth P7 billion.

According to Meralco, these projects would not only add a total of 289 megavolt amperes (MVA) to the company's distribution substation capacity, but also cut the utility's technical system loss by as much as 6 million kilowatt-hours (MWh) a year. This is equivalent to an estimated P37.2-million reduction in system loss charges to its customers.

Meralco Executive Vice President Ricardo V. Rustia-Antiporda disclosed that among the projects to be included were the construction of three new distribution substations, one subtransmission line upgrading, one subtransmission line reconfiguration and the upgrading of seven distribution lines.

Quick brown fix

BREAKTIME

Coconuts & Bastard 69

GO AHEAD and use me, but this is true: For big problems, our government, including the present Aquino (Part II) administration, simply goes for quick fixes.

Take the traffic in Metro Manila. Day to day traffic has always been bad, but during the holidays it has gotten unbearable. These days a travel time of 10 minutes at night—say, between Makati and Pasig—becomes several times longer in the daytime. You know, if you are lucky.

And what does our favorite MMDA—yes, the happily named Metro Manila Development Authority—do about it? Well, basically it's developed nothing. OK, so this administration already banned the use of "swing-swing," which in itself was not a bad idea, although it was just a quick fix. The thing was it "replaced" it with—you guessed it—the idea behind it was for all government officials to suffer bad traffic with the rest of us.

Today, it is not easy for us to encounter convoys of official-looking vehicles that just sneak by everybody else in the streets, albeit, no more "swing-swing." Come on, did the schemers of our popular but hardly working, still during leader Benigno Simeon Cojuangco (BS) really think that, when all those big servants of the public no longer used sirens, the traffic in the metropolis would suddenly disappear?

* * *

NOW, that was our first Christmas season under the much-loved BS. You would think that the MMDA should have taken all sorts of measures to ease traffic. Not during such hours the so-called traffic enforcers still try their level best to hassle up at one particular corner—oftentimes half a dozen of them. Meantime, on a side street a few blocks away, traffic already runs into a mess. Not even a phalanx of the lone "enforcers" was there to put a little order there.

Oh, the MMDA did issue press releases on a plan to divert traffic to "alternative" routes using some side streets the middle of a stockpile. And that was it? Troubled road, yes, for its award-winning measures to ease the intolerable holiday traffic, the MMDA requested some 10 hrs's duty. Boom.

This U-turn thing, to begin with, was a band-aid solution, at least something to relieve the traffic information in the metropolis, while the government was taking its sweet time in putting up the lasting solution called infrastructure. And what did the government do? Well, it built motorcycle flyovers costing hundreds of millions of pesos for "U-turns." They immediately led to severe traffic.

There, all of a sudden, while nobody was looking, one quick fix by the government evolved into the final solution. Nobody can say he sure whether or not the government actually has the ability to tell the difference.

* * *

FOR THE Administration power thirsty-ups in Hinlalaxan, the Aquino (Part II) administration wowed the business community with another, yes, quick fix. When, a couple of months ago, someone had come up with Hinlalaxan's a serious lack of long power failures, the Palace came up with a bright idea. And that was, well, to get rid of the problem, this administration simply took it out of government hands and quickly passed it on to the private sector.

After long meetings with his experts in energy, our beloved BS agreed that the private power distributors companies in Hinlalaxan should source their own power supply. Duh? And everybody thought that the utilities in Hinlalaxan precisely did not have any more power or distributor simply because there weren't any left. How could they now source supply on their own? Wala na nga, eh! Hello!

* * *

ACTUALLY, the power problem in Hinlalaxan is deeper than just who sources power from whom, because it is a problem of government policy. The government-owned Napocor, which still controls most of the power sources on the island, fixed its charges at less than commercial rates. Meaning, if private firms were to put up new power plants on the island, they would have to invest their down their pricing to the Napocor levels.

That was the biggest reason why hardly anybody dared to put up power plants to the area for the past several years. Yet the construction of new power plants is the most burning solution to the Hinlalaxan power crisis. In the meantime, business in Hinlalaxan has to make do with more expensive sources such as the power barges that are owned by the Aboitiz group (shipping, banking, power supply).

Reyes, on the other hand, in a top-level meeting with our leader BS in Hubandung, energy officials and industry representatives agreed that the Palace somehow must try to persuade the ERC to effect an adjustment in power rates in Hinlalaxan for the power barges, at least to adopt to the reality of high cost of lumber fuel. But word has it that the ERC succumbed to other political pressure from local politicians in Hinlalaxan who were deemed, er, "unfriendly" to the BS administration. Based on the ERC's report, again the Aboitiz group's power rate that was much lower than what the ERC already granted other power companies. For the so-called capacity fee, for instance, the ERC earlier set for the Aboitiz-owned power barges a rate of 92 centavos a kilowatt-hour (kWh).

Henry Power Corp., for instance, has an ERC-approved capacity fee of P1.34 a kWh. Other private power generating companies like Mindanao Energy Systems Inc. (Diesel) get a capacity fee of P1.27 a kWh, while the Power and Light Co. (Cepalco) enjoys a capacity fee of P1.27 a kWh. Again, thanks to the ERC.

From what I heard, ERC gave in to some political pressure, supposedly from a congressman who hails from—guess what?—the same area as the franchise of Cepalco.

DOTC says Panglao still best location for airport

From page B1

according to the Nedo JCC-CC, the project was approved on condition that the provincial government of Bohol was to conduct another multi-sectoral consultation to address conflicts or environmental issues.

Earlier, a group of academics, lawyers and religious Bohol-based activists based in Metro Manila renewed their call for the government to "not rush" the planned international airport on Panglao Island as the state prepared to bid out a contract as part of a package of partnerships with the private sector.

In a letter to Transportation and Communication Secretary Jose R de Jesus, University of the Philippines economics professor Antonio M. Nieto said public consultations were not properly carried out and the feasibility study on the geologically unstable island was also questionable.

Pernia, who represents the group called Concerned Boholano Professionals in Metro Manila, said there was a fish Out the runway and buildings would collapse due to the sinkholes and caves, which government engineers failed to consider. "More than a billion pesos [for the study] because here using ground-penetrating radar were apparently not done.

"We have reviewed the feasibility study done by the TCGI Engineers, the consulting firm hired for the contract and we found the study's quality and rigor markedly below par," he said. "For instance, the economic forecasts are overly optimistic based on questionable assumptions."

Ayala eyes stake in railway rehab

From page B1

Nissaya and Hinlalaxan.

The PNR line currently runs from Tutuban to Alabang, carrying about a million passengers a month. This makes it Metro Manila's least used train system. The Metro Rail Transit line on Edsa carries about 580,000 passengers daily.

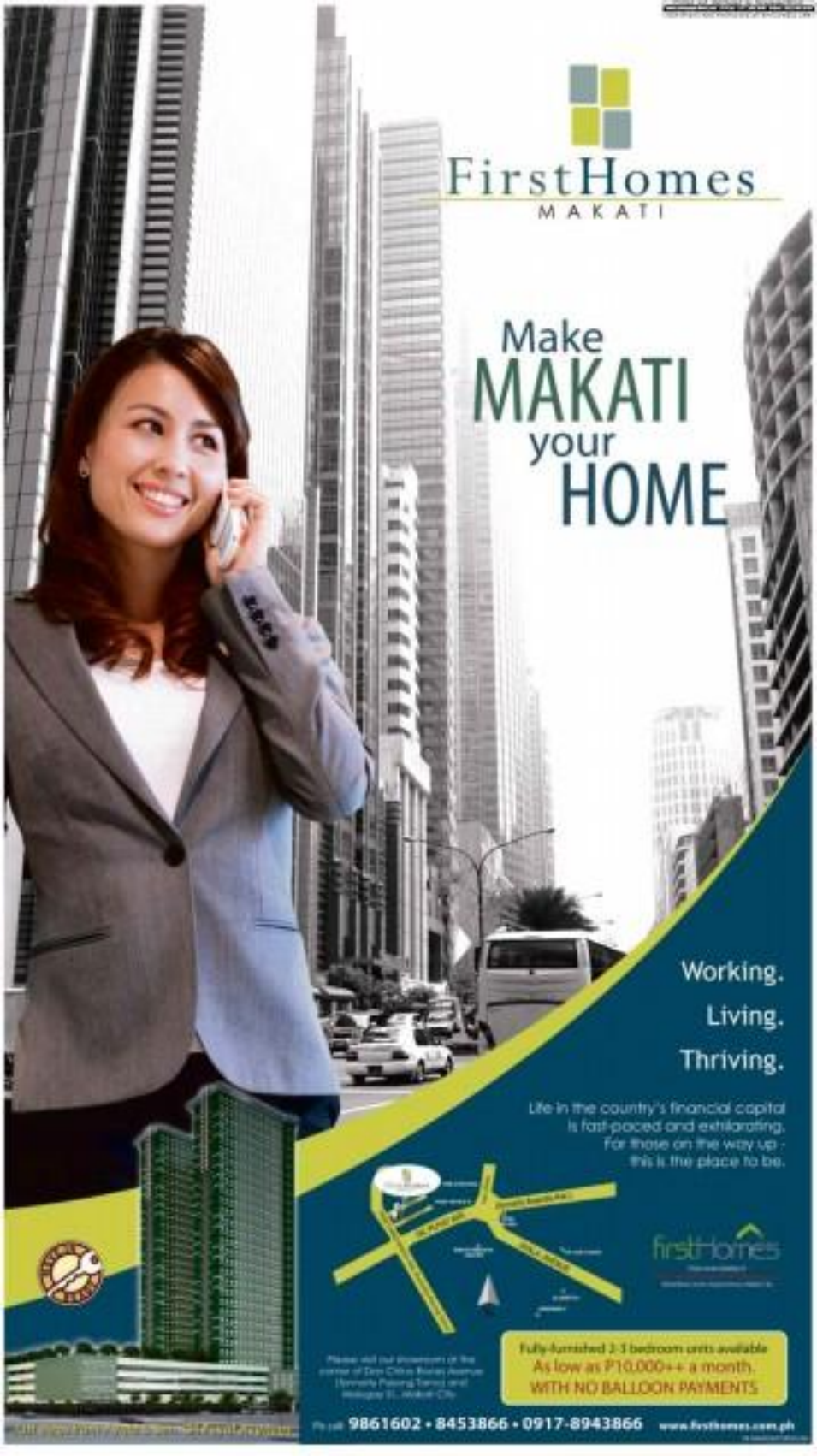
The Light Rail Transit lines 1 and 2 have a daily ridership of 500,000 and 250,000 passengers, respectively.

Eventually, the government plans to have the operations and management of the PNR line to be privatized.

TO THE ONE-DERS AND BEYOND

Davao

PASASALAMAT NIGHT 2010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Stock funds seen up in '11 on economy, reforms

Story on Page B9

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INFOTECH

MacPad U260

Having the slightest IdeaPad

By Raquel P Gamez

NETBOOKS, OR laptops with smaller screen sizes and ultra thin lightweight designs, have been experiencing a surge in market popularity.

Riding on this wave, Lenovo Philippines recently launched the IdeaPad U260 and ThinkPad Edge 11—lightweight devices without optical drives but packed with powerful and efficient processors.

Marketed as a "luxury" laptop, the IdeaPad U260 is a stunning 12.5-inch ultra-portable that features a magnesium-aluminum alloy cover, black leather-patterned palm rest, and glass touchpad.

It weighs less than three pounds and measures just over half an inch thin. It is powered by Intel Core i3 ultra-mobile processor with up to 4 GB DDR3 memory and 320 GB hard disk storage.

"The IdeaPad U260 is ... for someone with discerning tastes that desires high quality and elegance paired with the freedom of immense mobility," said Michael Xpan, country manager for home and small-medium business Lenovo Philippines.

The new IdeaPad belongs in Lenovo's "fun and fashionable" line—laptops that feature sophisticated designs and packed with cutting-edge features, he said.

With its pretty orange matte texture, metal build and minimalist appearance, the laptop looks like a high-end lifestyle product meant to be shown off.

The IdeaPad features a "breathable" keyboard, which is an advanced hard-coding technology.

Ambient light sensors help protect users' eyes by automatically adjusting screen brightness based on lightning conditions. The laptop also has an active protection system—its "airbag" that cushions the hard drive and minimizes the effects of jolts and impacts, protecting the data stored within.

The laptop also has stereo surround functions. It features Dolby Advanced Audio surround speakers, HD480 port for streaming high definition videos when linked to an HDTV, and an integrated 0.3M camera.

The price starts at P44,990 and comes installed with Windows 7 Home Premium and Lenovo Enhanced Experience—an application that speeds up boot-up and shut-down times.

The ThinkPad Edge 11 is a new addition to the ThinkPad Edge family—a series of laptops aimed for the SME market segment.

Featuring an 11.6-inch slot screen, the ThinkPad Edge 11 is a true netbook, even though its specs may say otherwise.

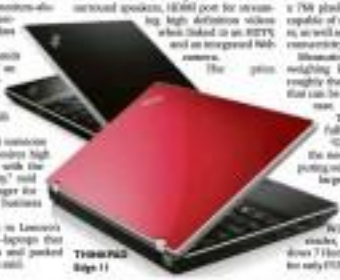
It features an Intel Core i3 380 UM processor (clocked at 1.33 GHz), 800 MHz FSB, and 3 MB cache), Intel HD graphics, 2 GB DDR memory, high resolution camera (1366 x 768 pixels), and six cell lithium battery capable of seven hours of computing power, as well as SIM card slot for 3G or 4G data connectivity.

Measuring 1.1 inch in breadth and weighing less than three pounds, it is roughly the size of a thin paperback book that can be easily carried in a bag or briefcase.

The ThinkPad Edge 11 also has a full-size spill-proof keyboard.

"Our ThinkPad Edge addresses the needs of SMBs for a trusted computing solution without having to pay for large-enterprise features," Pigao explained.

The device, which comes with a built-in webcam, BeMAX, Bluetooth, multicard readers, WiFi 802.11 b/g/n and Windows 7 Home Premium (64bit) OS—retails for only P55,000.



ThinkPad Edge 11

Nokia sees growth in mobile Internet

By Rex T Ochoterra

NOKIA SEES a big year for mobile Internet and localized applications as it strengthens its hold on more than half of the handset market in the Philippines.

The communications giant is also counting on growth in sales of replacement phones as more sophisticated users are drawn to handsets and software upgrades, according to Benoit Hallet, general manager of Nokia Philippines.

"It is already common to see Filipinos carrying more than one phone, and sometimes they use two devices at the same time. [The Philippines] is a mature market, like Singapore and Australia, so we're poised to really be the driver of growth. Mobile Internet and applications will support this," Nailin said.

"Next year will be the mobile Internet boom, I think, in the Philippines," he added.

By the end of 2010, a daily average of 6 Filipinos and of 10 may choose Nokia over its competitors, the company said.

This is across price bands, Nailin said.

Citing a Gfk survey, Nailin said Nokia's market share in the P1,500-P2,000 price band stood at 73.5 percent. In the midrange segment, where the Nokia C3 model is driving sales of sporty handsets, the company held 71 percent.

"The sweet-y segment alone has grown 87 percent in three months in the Philippines since we launched the C3. People talk about smartphones but most people are buying qwerty phones," Nailin said.

Mist, Nokia introduced the highly anticipated Nokia 5800

NOKIA C3

for the high-end segment. This model has been dubbed the world's best entertainment smartphone.

"This is purely pricing and we know why Filipinos are used to the Nokia keypad, for example, and the Symbian operating system," Nailin said. "Traditionally people recognize the quality and value for money."

The Symbian Symbian operating system has been upgraded and combined with engaging services like Nokia Messaging and Ovi store that keep to pace with today's lifestyle, making it possible for consumers to enjoy and enhance the way they communicate.

Since Nokia started in the business, Nailin said, the company has committed itself to leading the industry by creating innovation to enable phone technology.

"When we launched Nokia Messaging with the Nokia C3, for example, we saw the eagerness and excitement of Filipinos to go beyond SMS and into the realm of social networks, chat and e-mail at that affordable price point," Nailin said.

"The device itself was half the story the other half was the services and apps we put on the device that went with it. The same thing happened with our Ovi Store download. Since we started to engage more developers to create locally relevant apps, we've seen more frequent visits and downloads from the Ovi Store."

NOKIA 5800

IT firms stand up for climate solutions

IBM MINDSTORM and business executives, under the leadership of the Mexican government, recently met in Cancun, Mexico to present and discuss the "Guadalajara ICT Declaration for Transformative Low Carbon Solutions."

The meeting coincided with the 16th Conference of the Parties, where negotiations on global climate were held.

The Guadalajara Declaration, which focused on transformative low carbon ICT climate solutions, was supported by more than 40 companies and organizations from more than 20 countries, which collectively accounted for more than $1 trillion in revenues in 2009.

Historically climate negotiations have focused on high carbon-emitting sectors, and industry was seen to be the problem.

The declaration stressed from the need of many companies with solutions to climate change to have their voices heard, and the industry has come together to develop it after COP15.

"The declaration has generated high interest around the world, and more and more companies are signing on to the declaration every day," says Lide Steves, chairperson of the Global e-sustainability Initiative (GeSI).

The declaration builds on early work of the sector showing ICT's potential to reduce CO2 emissions by 15 percent by 2020, according to the SmartGSD report.

"It becomes strongly apparent the benefit of the public-private work stream with the ICT industry to develop low-carbon solutions, and congratulates the Mexican government for ... taking this historic step," said Hans Verhoeg, president and CEO, Telenor. "In order to leverage the broadband infrastructure deployed around the world, we need to have a supporting policy framework. This will help accelerate the uptake of transformative low-carbon solutions in areas such as transportation, utilities, communications, health and the creation of smarter, more sustainable societies in general. ICT solutions are unique because they can be used by all countries. This is good for environment as well as for the economy."

Globe strengthens 'world widest' coverage for roaming subscribers

GLOBE TELECOM is prepared to serve the needs of its roaming subscribers this yuletide season with the expansion of its international network.

Offering a variety of international call and text offers to postpaid and prepaid subscribers, Globe continues to augment its roaming lists in anticipation of the usual traffic experienced during the holidays.

"With over 600 roaming partners from all over the world supported by our strong and reliable network facilities, we are ready to provide our subscribers with seamless connectivity wherever they are," said Nilda Acosta, head for International and Core Services of Globe.

"The continuous buildup of our world wide coverage is part of our goal to deliver quality services to our customers both here and abroad, especially during Christmas and New Year, when voice and text traffic are expectedly higher."

Subscribers using roaming services are encouraged to perform basic troubleshooting by refreshing their mobile phones (turning off and then on again) in case they experience signal problems. They may also switch on a Globe partner available within their area.

Globe is a member of Bridge Alliance, Asia Pacific's largest and leading mobile bloc with 11 member countries: Airtel (India), AIS (Thailand), CSL (Hong Kong), CTM (Macau), Globe Telecom (Philippines), Maxis (Malaysia), SingTel Mobile (Singapore), SingTel Optus (Australia), SK Telecom (Korea), Taiwan Mobile (Taiwan) and Telkomsel (Indonesia).

For roaming concerns, call the Globe Roaming Support Hotline at 1+632 730.1212 (toll-free from any Globe Handyphone). Texts will apply when using a landline or other phones abroad.

In China, an Android goes by the name 'Huawei'

By Raquel P Gamez

THE BRAND "Huawei" is emerged on every USB Wi-Fi dongle sold by major telcos. It popularized the use of 3G Internet or wireless Internet via HSPDA (high-speed packet data access) for mobile devices.

Now the Chinese original equipment manufacturer (OEM) is keen on establishing itself as a maker of branded mobile devices like smartphones and tablets targeting mass consumers.

Recently, it announced the coming of affordable 3-inch smartphones and a tablet device that runs on Google's Android operating system.

With a supposed retail price of P6,888, the U8500 may be the most affordable Android smartphone available. Running on the latest Android Froyo 2.2 mobile operating system, the U8500 U8110 is powered by a 528 MHz mobile processor and capable of 7.2 Mbps Internet speed.

Available in black, yellow, blue and purple, this compact phone doubles as a Wi-Fi hub that enables users to enjoy the Internet wherever they are. U8500 may instantly turn into a push-word-powered wireless hotspot providing simultaneous wireless support for up to eight devices at a time.

Equipped with a 528MHz processor and 256MB RAM, the U8500 provides users a responsive and smooth interface.

The smartphone has a 2.8-inch capacitive touchscreen and other useful features, such as voice dialing, voice navigation, and the ability to run applications off an SD card.

As an Android phone, the U8500 allows users access to over 70,000 applications available in the Android Market.

The U8500 is a chocolate bar shaped smart phone running on Android 2.2 (Froyo).

This Wi-Fi ready smartphone features not only a touchscreen display but an ergonomically designed qwerty keypad.

Targeting young users engaged in social networking, the U8500 will be available in green, yellow and purple.

The G1100 is Huawei's entry-level but phone meant for everyday use.

Retailing for only P888, it already features a colored 1.47-inch LCD screen and an Internal FM radio receiver.

But by far the most interesting Huawei product is the IDEOS Tablet S7, an however tablet/communication device multimedia player that has an 800 x 480 pixel screen resolution, which is enough to provide users with 720p high definition video playback.

Retailing just below P20,000, the IDEOS Tablet S7 features Qualcomm Snapdragon mobile processor (768 MHz) and Android 2.1 (Eclair) mobile operating system.

HUAWEI Ideos S7 Android tablets

HUAWEI Ideos

Stock funds seen up in '11 on economy, reforms

Fund managers may boost consumer, property, power holdings

PHILIPPINE stock funds, among the top performers in Southeast Asia this year, are eyeing keeping or even adding to bets on consumer, property and power sector plays in 2011, such as Alliance Global Group, banking on a growing economy and policy reforms.

Three of the five Southeast Asian equity funds with the highest returns so far this year are Manila-based, with the Union Bank Large Capitalization Philippine Equity Portfolio returning 364 percent, thrice the Philippine stock market's 31 percent gain.

The funds forecast the Philippine market's double-digit gains to extend into 2011 and beyond, with low valuations even making the bond market unappealing and as expectations of more foreign and local direct investments as the government pursues broad transparency reforms.

"This is a long-term bull market," said Michael Garcia, chief investment officer and head of trust and investments at Union Bank of the Philippines, which oversees the UBP Large Cap fund.

"I'm a going to continue in maybe five, even eight years. We have all the elements in place," Garcia said.

Some 3041 equity funds focused on Southeast Asian countries manage about $38 billion in assets and have returned about 27 percent on average up to November this year, according to data from Lipper, a Thomson Reuters Service.

The $12 million UBP Large Cap Fund holds only about 12 stocks, with Ayala Land Corp., property-to-finance holding firm Alliance Global and port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) as its top three picks.

Three stocks have risen more than 200 percent, 100 percent and 90 percent, respectively, this year.

Garcia said the UBP fund will retain its ICTSI holdings as it expects trade activity to pick up once the US economy gains traction.

Alliance Global is also a favorite among fund managers after it recorded double-digit profits mainly from its barrel-maker project in Manila and property firm Megaworld Corp.

The two firms will stay on in fund managers' portfolios in 2011, along with energy-to-property conglomerate DMCI Holdings, which soared more than 200 percent. Among overseer firms, Manila fund manager Up picks in 2011 and into next year includes food and drinks firm Universal Robina Corp., which has risen than doubled this year. Reuters

INVESTMENT FUND	Net Asset Value Per Unit	
	12/24/2010	12/31/2009
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

INVESTMENT FUND	Net Asset Value Per Unit	
	12/24/2010	12/31/2009
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

AgriNurture targets US food market

By Rose T. Chichioco

SUBIC/CLARK (PNA) seeks to export fresh and processed fruits and vegetables to the growing Asian food market in the United States.

Officials said that shipments in the order of 70 containers per month, worth about P280 million, would be lined up by early next year.

"That refers to all items including juices," AFM CEO Antonio L. Tiu said in a text message.

AFM CFO Kenneth S. Tan earlier told reporters that the company, which employs the farm-to-plate model, is negotiating with several distributors in the US to be able to export processed vegetables and high-value products such as powdered peas, malunggay or moringa leaves, jute leaves and bihun (rice) noodles.

Los Angeles, Hawaii, Nevada and other areas with dense Asian populations are the primary distribution targets.

If talks go as planned, AFM products could be in retail food stores in the United States by the first quarter of 2011, Tan said.

"We are mainly interested in the Asian food market in the US. It is a niche market but it is fast growing," Tiu said.

The United States is a premium market that the Philippine targets for its food exports, including sugar and coconut.

IPO office taps universities to encourage R&D

By Abigail L. Hu

THE INTELLECTUAL Property Office of the Philippines has entered into partnerships with various colleges and universities to innovate, in a bid to boost the country's research and development output.

In an interview, IPOPHIL deputy director general Ma. Socorro Mitchael Ong said the government agency now has secured 23 partner-schools, including the University of Santo Tomas, De La Salle University and Adamson University.

Partner-schools in the Visayas include San Carlos University and University of Cebu, he added.

He said IPOPHIL was also recently with the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila University for their participation in the R&D program.

Under the program, private firms can tap local universities for R&D activities. This way, more R&D work and end-user manufacturing will be done in-country.

IPOPHIL said be part of the mix to ensure that whatever intellectual property will result from the industry-university collaboration will be protected.

The target is to reach 100 partner-schools.

"This is some kind of public-private partnership. Our collaborators with these schools it at no cost to the government," he said.

The government-university research model is prevalent in industrialized countries such as the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

Private companies are usually also involved in the partnership by commercializing the results of scientific and technological research done by higher academic institutions.

The Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. is calling for a similar model of cooperation, in this case between industry and the government.

Subic is urging government to put up an R&D facility that will enable the country to preserve the billions of dollars in investments that are now being poured into neighboring economies.

INQUIRER Monday
NATIONAL
CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Reaching Classifieds

RATES
DEADLINES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2010
B10

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

GENERAL FUNDS FOR SALE

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MEDICAL DOCTORS

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

HealthGov

The Strengthening Local Governance for Health (HealthGov) Project is a USAID-funded project supporting the government's efforts to provide improved basic health services in partnership with local government units (LGUs) throughout the Philippines.

INVITATION to submit EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Strengthening Local Governance for Health (HealthGov) Project

The Local Governance for Health Project (HealthGov) is in need of four highly qualified and committed individuals to provide short-term technical assistance (STTA) support to local government units (LGUs) in implementing community-based health activities to ensure that available data are used for planning, financing, and decision-making at the LGU level.

Qualifications, Abilities and Skills

1. Bachelor's or Master's degree in Health, Economics, Research, and related fields/ sciences;
2. Minimum of 1 (with Bachelor's) to 3 (with Master's) years of related work experience in LGU capacity building activities, particularly in the areas of health information systems, field research services and assessment of LGU health data and information systems;
3. Basic knowledge on local health systems management, particularly on health information systems (familiarity with the Department of Health's Field Health Service Information System (FHSIS) is an advantage);
4. Willingness to travel and be assigned to the field for a period of 2 weeks to one month;
5. Strong communication and computer skills in the English language;
6. Proficient in standard office computer applications, particularly in Excel;
7. Ability to build effective relationships with clients, peers, and stakeholders; and
8. Ability to work independently and within a team environment; expected quality results.

Over $770 will be given for each of these regions, namely: Luzon, Visayas, Northwestern Mindanao, and Southern Mindanao. Applicants are requested to specify their preferred area of assignment, if desired.

Interested individuals are requested to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), including a brief cover letter and updated curriculum vitae, to the address indicated below on or before 10 January 2011.

e-mail: healthgov1@gmail.com
fax: (+632) 596-1870
mail: Chief of Party
HealthGov Project
RTI International
2330 2334 Tycoon Center
Pasig Boulevard, Ortigas Center
1605 Pasig City

RTI
INTERNATIONAL

RTI is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Only qualified individuals will be contacted. For inquiries, please contact Yvonne Joshua Galvez, Contracts Specialist at (+632) 596-0841.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO BID

Project Title
Scope of Work
Project Location
Approved Budget for the Contract(ABC)
Source of Funding
Contract Duration
Minimum Requirements
Prequalification
Contract Conditions Documents
Certification of Contractors' Performance
Non-Payment Contractors' Liability
Credit Line Certificate
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance
Date of Issuance
Deadline/Conference
Date and Time
Venue
Document Submission
Opening of Bids
Date and Time
Venue
Acceptance of Bid Documents
Bid Security
Validity of Bid Proposals
Award of Contract
Contact Information

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO BID

The PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY (PRA) invites interested parties to participate in the public bidding for the sale of two (2) PRA lots located at the BRESCO Reclamation Project in Barangay 76, Pasay City, described as follows:

PROPERTY	AREA (sq.m.)
1	12,000
2	12,000

The following are qualified to bid:

1. Any Filipino citizen, of legal age, who has the capacity to undertake contracts; and
2. Any government-owned or -controlled corporation, government financial institution, or public corporation authorized to transact business pursuant to their Charter, incorporation papers or other existing laws.

Interested qualified parties may obtain the Terms of Reference and Bid Documents from the Marketing Department, 7th Floor, Legaspi Towers 300, Plaza de Roxas, Makati City on weekdays, starting 15 November 2010 and 7 January 2011 from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (Monday to Friday) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: THREE THOUSAND ONLY (P3,000.00) in cash or Manager's or Cashier's check payable to Philippine Reclamation Authority.

The required pre-qualification documents and duly-accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms of Reference should be submitted/deposited at the Bid Box located within PRA Lobby, 7th Floor, Legaspi Towers 300, Plaza de Roxas, Makati City on or before 1:30 P.M. on 11 January 2011. Public opening of bids, to be conducted by the PRA Bid Evaluation and Awards Committee (PREBAC), shall follow at 2:00 P.M. on the same date.

For further information, please call the Marketing Department at telephone numbers (02) 811-1111 to 13 locals 734, 739 and 812.

(Sgd.) PETER ANTHONY A. ABAYA
General Manager/CEO

(PEA - Nov. 22, 26; Dec. 6, 13, 20 & 27, 2010)

CALL POEA
24-HOUR HOTLINES
722-1144 or 722-1155

Tarlac High School Batch 1971 Ruby Anniversary

INVITING ALL MEMBERS OF TARLAC HIGH school batch 1971

A 40th Ruby Anniversary Alumni Homecoming will be held on Jan. 15, Sa ni, at the THS Function Hall, followed by a Fellowship Night at Star Houses, San Vicente Tarlac. Come and Join the Fun!

PDI SUPPORTS TELEDEVELOPMENT SERVICES INC.-5TH ANNUAL CALL CENTER AND BPO TRAINING CONVENTION

The Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) is a proud media partner of the 5th Annual Call Center and BPO Training Convention organized by TeleDevelopment Services Inc (TDS). The industry event will be held on Feb. 23 to 25, 2011 at the Hotel World Hotel, Makati City. Shown from left are Mars Barinuea, TDS training manager; Janet Lim-Napoles, TDS senior training manager; and Prince Rebustillo, PDI assistant vice president for Classified Ads and Andre Yeru, TDS senior training officer, during the signing of the agreement.

PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Invitation for Bids

Health Systems Reform Project
EC 97-0065-02

Various Drugs and Medicines
PB NO. (Various)

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a grant from the European Commission (EC) and intends to apply part of the proceeds to eligible payments under the Contract for which this Invitation for Bids is issued.
2. The Province of Zamboanga del Norte, implementing partner of the Department of Health, now invites Sealed Bids for the following: Various Drugs and Medicines. Delivery is to be made within 30 days upon receipt of Purchase Order. The duration of the supply contract is from the date of the Notice to Proceed to December 31, 2010.
3. Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at the Provincial Health Office, Capitol Building, Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines, Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00). The Bidding Documents may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) at www.philgeps.gov.ph. The Procuring Entity shall inform all bidders who have purchased the Bidding Documents of any addenda.
5. The Province of Zamboanga del Norte reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
6. Bid prices shall be valid for 120 days from the date of the opening of bids.
7. Bid opening shall be on January 10, 2011 at 10:00 am. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The Province of Zamboanga del Norte reserves the right to disqualify any bidder who is found by the Procuring Entity to be engaged in corrupt, fraudulent, collusive, coercive, and obstructive practices in competing for the contract.

(Sgd.) ANGELINA S. LADERA
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI-December 27, 2010)

JOB MARKET
From the nation's No. 1 Newspaper: INQUIRER
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dti

INVITATION TO BID

FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS IT EQUIPMENT, PERIPHERALS AND SOFTWARE

1. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through the Project Development Unit and the Procurement Service, intends to apply the sum of [illegible] being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the "Supply and Delivery of Various IT Equipment, Peripherals and Software".
2. The DTI now invites bids for the supply and delivery of various IT equipment, peripherals and software. Delivery of the goods is required to be completed within thirty (30) days from receipt of Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed within the last five (5) years a contract similar to the Project. The description of an equipment is detailed in the Bidding Documents which may be purchased from the address below.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

   Bidding is restricted to Philippine citizens/organizations, cooperatives with at least seventy percent (70%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines and to firms or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights to Filipinos as Philippine laws, pursuant to GPA Article XIII and Commonwealth Act 138.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from DTI and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 to 5:00.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders starting on December 27, 2010 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of [illegible] (Php 1,000.00).
6. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PHILGEPS), and from the website of the Procuring Entity, provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.
7. The DTI shall hold a Pre-Bid Conference on 10 January 2011, 11:00 AM at the Senior Conference Room, 4/F Trade & Industry Building, 361 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, which shall be open to all interested parties.
8. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 1:00 PM (Philippine time). Late bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. Late bids shall not be accepted.
9. The DTI reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the Bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
10. For further information, please refer to:

[illegible]
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Department of Trade and Industry
361 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
Telephone No. [illegible]
E-mail: [illegible]
Website: www.dti.gov.ph

(PDI December 27, 2010)

Republic of the Philippines
CITY OF SAN JUAN
Bids and Awards Committee

CITY PLAZA PROPERTY AND DOMAIN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID
SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

The City Government of Salonga (the "City") is inviting developers and investors to pre-qualify and submit proposals for the above-referred project (the "Project") at the City Hall Plaza (the "Plaza").

The Property is in the commercial heart of the City where the renowned Julian Gonzalez Square is located. The Property is the most visible landmark of the Province of Salonga. It is situated across affairs of the City and across the central districts of the two Metro Manila de Salonga (please visit www.cityofsalonga.gov.ph for more pictures & 3D perspectives). The Project shall be developed into a mixed-use development with commercial, hotel(s) and service related activities in the city.

Only pre-qualified bidders shall submit and tender proposals and bid for the Project. Bidders who pre-qualify shall be advised to purchase bidding documents. Bidders who previously shall be advised to purchase bidding documents. Bidders who previously shall be advised to purchase bidding documents. Bidders who previously

BUSINESS Monday

E-MAIL business@inquire.com.ph
WEBSITE: www.inquirer.net/business

Simple steps to lasting (material) wealth

By Lila Berlongan Alvarez
Contributor

WEALTH! Its lack (basically) is reflected not as figures on the ATM screen but is anchored on the kind of person that you are, how you are (subscriber-prudently or on impulse) and how you remain true to your personal convictions.

In her article "10 Priceless Strategies for the New Decade," which appeared in the 10th anniversary edition of The Oprah Magazine, Suze Orman shares those simple steps to ensuring financial security:

1. **Be honest with yourself** as regards your finances. In local parlance, this means "magkakatotoo sa sarili" or "tanggapin ang katotohanan." A crushing credit card balance caused by your need to impress others is a costly lie, says Orman. "Living within your means is living honestly." Read: Find ways to save even a small amount a week or each month and in 20 years, it will grow to an amount that will surprise even the worst spendthrift. And if we may put in our two cents' worth: Keeping up with the Joneses will get you nowhere.

2. **Stop settling for what the world offers:** "You need to be your own best advocate. If there's no raise this year because of the economy, meet with your boss to determine generals for a raise next year. If you're self-employed and haven't increased your rates in years, why are you putting yourself at risk? I say it's less than's keeping you from having more in your life?" Orman says.

3. **Hope for the best, plan for the worst.** It's true. Unexpected events in one's life such as layoffs are destabilizing. Do note: says you make things worse when you see those events as major setbacks, instead of starting points for you to strategize and revitalize your life. You can reduce the pain by building an emergency fund, that is, money set aside in case of sickness or tragedy (which is as inevitable as death and taxes).

4. **Be generous.** Orman tells of the wealthy that people in financial trouble hold tightly to what they have. Although it's not really good motivation but perhaps a good place to start, she writes: "To put yourself in a position to receive more in life, you must first open your hands—and your heart—by giving to others today."

5. **Save for indulgences.** Building lasting wealth doesn't have to be an extremely rigid, lifelong undertaking. "Assuming you're on track with your retirement savings, have no credit card debt, and have an emergency savings fund, you shouldn't deny yourself some fun. (such as throwing a birthday party for friends and loved ones) as long as you've saved up for it," Orman advises.

6. **Prepare your must-have documents.** Make really your must-have "forever" documents you've sworn for years you'd prepare such as a will, for instance, a healthcare power of attorney, and the like.

7. **Leave something people** will remember you by, Orman says this is about the deathbed test. "Will loved ones describe you in terms of what you brought for yourself, or will they talk about who you were and how fiercely you loved? Make that question your guidepost, and life will be richer than you can imagine," she says.

What is paradigm shifting?

(A repost in Make Your Life A Project)

Dear Stephen,

The first weeks of 2011 are a great time for making life strategies.

As in boxing matches, we must form winning strategies. We cannot leave our lives to chance.

So, again let us ask: How do we stand up to adversities and trials? How can we succeed?

My author Hidenobu provided the first answer—by having a greater heart. It means a life based on good attitude—the morning leave the answer mind.

But good attitude is not enough.

The need for a rudder

We must develop a more reliable rudder (bubbler).

The dictionary defines the rudder as a blade at the stern of a ship that can be turned to change the ship's direction when in motion. We may have a great boat and a powerful engine, but without a rudder we would not be able to maneuver ourselves to our destination.

Similarly, we may have good attitudes and great goals in life, but if we do not have a guide to aid us maneuver through life, then we may end up marooned and fail to reach our destination.

Taking and changing positive characteristics what we do everyday. Should I wake up at 6 or 9 a.m.? Should I go to the office or to the movies? Shall I work overseas or stay in the country? Every step involves a decision.

Successful people are the deliberators consciously. Many times, we leave our decisions to chance.

Shifting paradigms

Taking and changing positions involves what Stephen Covey calls paradigm shifting.

He has this definition in his book, "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People": "... it's the way we 'see' the world—not in terms of our visual sense or sight, but in terms of perceiving, understanding, interpreting."

Selling shoes in Congress

Here's a story to illustrate paradigms—selling shoes in a faraway country called Congress.

The president of a well-known sports shoes manufacturer is expanding their market abroad.

He has heard of this populous country, Congress, where his company has not sold shoes. He sends Bob, an expert sales executive, to fly to Congress to determine the market potential of their shoes.

Bob lands in Congress and is shocked to see people in the airport barefooted. He takes the cab and all along the route he sees that hardly people can wear shoes. He immediately phones the president and declares with a heavy heart, "Boss, we haven't got any market here in Congress. They do not wear shoes!"

Bob then flies back to their office. The next day dejected and withdrawn sales prospect.

Eager to beat competition and expand his market, the president instructs another expert sales executive, Fred, to proceed to Congress and make his own assessment.

Fred takes the same plane, lands in the same airport, stays in the same hotel.

As soon as he arrives in his room, Fred phones the president. With great excitement in his voice, Fred declares, "Boss, it's unbelievable! We have a great market in Congress! People here don't wear shoes!"

It is the same country, same shoes, but two different characters. Fred and Bob. Same reality but epitomized in two opposing paradigms.

Discover, choose paradigms

Such is life. It often may a myriad of paradigms. The paradigm we choose will determine sales we see and value we do.

Our goal then is to discover the various divergent paradigms involved in our decision process and to choose the paradigm most suited to arrive at our objectives.

Stephen, I still give you another example of paradigm shifts. This time it is based on the life of Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart.

What is Wal-Mart?

Sam Walton and Walmart

Sam Walton founded Wal-Mart, a discount store in Arkansas, USA, in 1962. A small store in a small town some 50 years ago.

As of today Wal-Mart has been No. 1 in the Fortune 500 for seven times in the past nine years.

In 2010, Fortune 500 ranked Wal-Mart No. 1 company in America with $408.2 billion sales employing more than 2,300,000 people across the globe. It beats companies such as Exxon Mobil ($284.7 billion), General Electric ($156.8 billion), JP Morgan Chase ($115.6 billion) and Microsoft ($58.5 billion).

The IMF estimates the 2010 Philippine GDP at $165.5 billion. Compare these with Wal-Mart's $408.2 billion. The difference will give us an idea of the size of Wal-Mart.

Who was Sam Walton?

He was a farmer's son. As a boy, he helped his family by milking cows and delivered newspapers and magazines to subscribers in college, he served as a waiter to make both ends meet.

Forbes Magazine ranked Sam Walton the richest man in America from 1982 to 1988.

With his wealth we would think he would be living the life of the rich and famous—fancy cars, long yachts, luxe Jets, a chain of girlfriends and carousing in high style.

That is the world's paradigm on the rich and famous.

In his own words

Now here is the paradigm of Sam Walton in his own words in his 1992 autobiography, a legacy to his family and successors before dying of cancer:

"When we achieved all of being success, but I just don't believe a big showy lifestyle is appropriate for anywhere, least of all here in Bentonville where folks work hard for their money and where we all know that everyone puts on his trousers one leg at a time."

"Why do I drive a pickup truck? What am I supposed to load my dogs around in, a Rolls Royce?"

"We don't need to buy a yacht. And thank goodness we never thought we had to get out and buy anything like an island."

"On the road, we sleep two to a room, although as I've gotten older I have finally started staying in my own room. We stay in Holiday Inns and Ramada Inns and Days Inns, and we use a lot of family connections ..."

"But sometimes I'm asked why today should we stay so cheap? That's simple: Because we believe in the value of the dollar. We exist to provide value to our customers, which means that in addition to quality and service, we have to save them money ... Every time we save them a dollar, that puts us one more step ahead of the competition—which is where we always plan to be."

What is left from the conventional paradigm?

Take it from the entrepreneur who received in 1992 the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Presidents George H.W. Bush and the Queen Sirikit Recognizer's Award from China.

Take it from the founder whose worldwide customers have placed his company No. 1 in sales, not just in the United States but also on the entire globe in 2003, 2008, 2007 and 2008.

Stephen, in my next Missive let me tell you the seven steps of paradigm shifting in order to competitive and succeed.

Till then

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and not the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The writer is an entrepreneur and author of the books "The Five Essential Skills: Why Are We So Poor?" and "The Philippine Economy: Do Our Leaders Mean A Clue?" Feedback at mapping@info.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit map.org.ph.)

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2010 MUSIC SCENE

Top classical artists of the year

By Pablo A. Tariman
Classical Music

THE CELLIST of the Year is Qin Li Wei, silver medalist of the Tchaikovsky Competition and First Prize winner of the Nuremberg Competitions.

Assisted by Albert Tiu on his Manila debut, Qin dazzled with his solid, virtuoso runs in his opening numbers—Mozart's "Magic Flute's Rin Mei chen ohne veilchen" and Dvorak's Sonata in G Minor for Piano and Cello, Op. 65.

Also notable was cellist Mateo Michiel Coo, who was soloist in Schumann's cello concerto, and ably assisted by the Manila Symphony Orchestra.

The Conductors of the Year are Gerard Salonga of the PHILHARMONIA and artistic Molina of the Manila Symphony Orchestra.

Salonga was a big revelation, assisting Liszt in Saint-Saens' Piano Concerto No. 2 and De Falla's "Nights in the Gardens of Spain."

Molina lived up to Liszt's expectations in Chopin No. 2, which stunned audiences at Philamlife Theater, Greenbelt 5, and the simple folks at Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija.

My Collaborating Artists of the Year are Albert Tiu (with Qin Li Wei); Mary Rose Empino Cortés Molina and baritone Noel Asconia as "Rino the Conde" (concert version); and Noah Ismail (with Arthur Espiritu).

For consistently being on top and moving away with the Newsmaker Prize (Choir of

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TEMOK of the Year Artist Rapido

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Pasig announces winners of 'Paskong Himig'

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

"PASKONG Himig," the annual Christmas vocal solo and choral competition sponsored by the Pasig City government, held this year on three consecutive nights, Dec. 13-15, yielded renewed winners.

Divided into Children, Youth, Adult and Senior Citizen, the contest was held at the city's premiere theater, the Tanghalang Pasigueño, and witnessed by a big audience who came in droves filling the theater to capacity every night.

Mayor Robert "Bobby" C. Eusebio, his wife Maribel, Vice Mayor Natalie Martinez and members of the City Council were present on all the nights.

Maribel A. Ensemble, chair of the executive committee, extended a warm welcome to the contestants and the audience, citing the Pasigueño's love for music and the innate musicality of the Filipino.

"Paskong Himig," now on its 14th year, is a festive highlight of the celebration of the Yuletide season through singing in Pasig City, she said.

It complements Paskoning, a parade of visually arresting floats participated in by Pasig schools and businesses held on Dec. 12.

The top three winners in the Solo and Duets categories are:

Children's category: Mariella Y. Bautista (Dagat-dagatan Elementary School, Caloocan City), 1st Prize; Michelle Ann L. Javier (Pasig Elementary School, Pasig City), 2nd; and Vicko R. Jardinero (Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City), 3rd.

Juan Luna Elementary School Children's Choir (Juan Luna Elementary School, Sampaloc Manila), Mary Anne C. Villanueva, conductor, 1st; CES Hiraya ng Kalusugan (Commonwealth Elementary School, Quezon City), Sherry Mida A. Segullo, conductor, 2nd; and PCC Children's Choir (Pasig Catholic College, Malinao, Pasig City), Bet C. Eduche, conductor, 3rd.

Youth: Kristin Camille D. Maaño (Maybunga, Pasig City), 1st; Jeanne B. Nava (Maygaway-Nava, Pasig City), 2nd; and Mark Christian Cedenillo (San Roque, Antipolo City), 3rd.

University of Makati Chorale (University of Makati, West Rembo, Makati City), Elite Rosales, conductor, 1st; Manila South Chorale (Damon Slapayong High School, Manila), Michael G. de la Peña, conductor, 2nd; and PUP Laboratory High School Chorale (PUP Laboratory High School, Sauc, Cavite), Jonathan A. Jesús, conductor, 3rd.

Adult: Maribi J. Villanueva (Bautista-Bias, Cavite), 1st; Adria L. Zaldivar (Malaking, Mandaluyong City), 2nd; and Reg. Jay G. Naranjo (Happyland, Tondo, Manila), 3rd.

San Antonio de Padua Chamber Choir (Quiapo, Manila), 4th. Jo Anderson, conductor, 1st; Chorus Vocalis MEDAC (Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City), Ramiro M. Aguilar, conductor, 2nd; and Gloria Deo! Singers (Cainta, Rizal), Cheyenne Dimagiba, conductor, 3rd.

Senior Citizen: Gerry C. Bautista (Pembilan, Quezon City), 1st; Concepcion N. Mariano (Dagupan, Tondo, Manila), 2nd; Pacita E. Manalaysay (Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City), 3rd.

The Golden Nightingale Chorale (Project 8, Quezon City), Reginaldo B. Lim, conductor, 1st; Kapatirang ng Senior Citizens ng Bicutan (KSCB) Choir (Bicutan, Pasig City), Cancar M. Vivo, conductor, 2nd; and Assumption of Project Choir (Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Pasig City), Bro. E. Eduche, conductor, 3rd.

The top three winners in the Solo category went home with P7,000, P5,000 and P3,000, respectively.

In the Choral category, the top three prizes got P8,000, P5,000 and P3,000.

The board of judges was composed of the country's top conductors: Fidel C. Calalang Jr. of the UST Singers; Mark Anthony Carpio of the UP Madrigal Singers; Imelda Delarmente of the DLSU Manila Chorale; and Nicanor Tolentin of the Hyde ng Pilipinas Children's Choir.

Our sentiment: congratulations!

WATCH Robert C. Eusebio and wife Maribel, conductors of choirs in the Adult category and judges

Great-Tasting Sangria with Good Food

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Have lots of fun the next time you have your friends over for a fun get together.

Now that's refreshing!

UP Christmas concert features great choral singing

RAAL Navarro conducts the composite choir with the UP Symphony Orchestra.

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

HOSTIVE choral singing marked the University of the Philippines College of Music's Yuletide celebration last Dec. 16 at the Abelardo Hall. The concert featured Philippine Christmas songs and the Christmas portion of George Frederic Handel's immortal oratorio "Messiah."

The UP Concert Chorus, UP Chorus classics, UP Los Baños Chorale, UP Madrigal Singers, conducted respectively by Janet Arceñas, Madi Carpio, Russel Angelo Lontoc and Katherine Trangco, took turns in singing.

Soloists are Martin Segarra, soprano; Janet Arceñas, alto; Aristo Cristino, tenor; and Ramiro Cruz, flautist Jourdan Escabon was the collaborating artist, and Raul Navarro was the music director-conductor of the UP Orchestra.

The audience came in droves, filling up the hall to 80% that choirs had to be added.

The concert was in keeping with the glorious traditions of the UP community, said UP Music dean José Buenconsejo in his welcome remarks.

He emphasized that the performance was an "expression of social action," a dynamic endeavor that assures the college's relevance in the total university life, music being a catalyst rather than an inert reflection of social reality.

The concert thus was a poignant counterpoint, bringing joy and peace to the "otherwise chaotic everyday Philippine society," he said. It became an upbeat involvement, an expression of the festive mood of the Yuletide season ingrained in the psyche of Philippine society. It's like a creative transformation along the universal message of love of Christmas.

Community singing

Familiar Philippine Christmas songs such as "Kumpare ng Simbang Gabi," arranged by Jesus Villaseñor; "Kundiman Ning Tabaco (Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit)," arranged by Josel Navarro; as well as classic Christmas compositions by Ramon Santos ("Tatlong Mahiwaga Antiking Panimdim") and Lucio San Pedro ("Nasaksihang Gabi"); and modern carols arranged in contemporary vein ("Deck the Hall and "Gloria in Excelsis") all elicited hearty applause.

The audience did not focus passively; they hummed, swayed, clapped in them. In the community singing of traditional carols at the end, they sang with gusto, making the concert a meaningful interactive endeavor.

More dynamic singing was heard on the second part as the participating choirs formed a massive composite huge choir singing the choruses of Handel's "Messiah," with the UP Orchestra conducted by Navarro.

Massive choral sound

A massive choral sound reverberated, moving the audience to unrepressed cheering. The soloists sang the arias with the collaborative artistry of pristine Petrine. The rendition may be likened to an antiphonal endeavor richly evoking contrast in color and dynamics.

When the "Hallelujah Chorus" was finally sung, everybody stood up, with again some of the audience joining in the singing, albeit prehistorically. They simply could not contain the joy, the grandeur and majesty of the piece that has remained well-loved to this day.

The exuberance mixed with much confidence, as did the gimmicks and all the stages. The concert, indeed, had harmony as common for dynamic interaction that espoused the joyful mood of the season.

Outside, at the quadrangle, lighting of the Christmas tree was officiated by Chairman Magdis, chair of the Music student council, amid the fanfare of the brass instruments, and fireworks display.

The lighting was a novel addition to the traditional concert, making the Yuletide celebration both festive and symbolic. Outstanding being its seamless beacon light!

'Orosman at Zafira' returns February 2011, at SM Mall of Asia CenterStage

DECLARING UP-with Her by Bit Developments Company is bringing back its blockbuster production of Francisco Balagtas's "Orosman at Zafira" in February 2011. The show will run Feb. 3-26, for a total of 15 performances, at the SM Mall of Asia CenterStage.

The production, directed and choreographed by Denise M. Barcos, with original music by Carol Bello, is a contemporary adaptation of Balagtas' comedy. The cast includes a mix of some of Philippine theater's established, as well as most promising talents: Maita Dimas, Delphine Buenaventura, Jose Jacilli-Javier, Nonie Buñuel, Roselor Cornelio, Ike Arez, Rory Aguilar, Carlo Ramos.

"A blinding standard-theater superiority, and, not incidentally, a rolling carol for host dispute de-mom—Sobrecarey's own Nagaling true, Bello's new-orthate world music, Nonie' lyrical choreography—would create something uniquely pressing-ly homegrown, as far away from Broadway as could be."—Libin Cielo, Philippine Daily Inquirer

For show-buying opportunities and ticket information, call 0917-8317946 (Darwin Martinez), 0917-8322788/0917-8427548/0922-8427346 (Carlo Ramos) or e-mail darwin.martinez@gmail.com or ramos.carlo@gmail.com. Tickets are available at SM cinema ticket booths and TicketWorld (National Book Store, Robinsons Department Stores, Goodwill 1, Glorietta 5 and TriWorld cinema ticket booths).

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Top classical artists of the year

Pumunta C1

the World, in their latest international competition, the UST Singers, under Fidel Calalang of the UST Conservatory of Music, a Choir of the Year.

For bringing the Team of Dance Ballet, which vanished in one evening of indescribable excitement, Lou Moraga Elizalde is my Dance Impresario of the Year.

Rare jewel

For bringing back Cecile Licad and reclaiming her rendition Philharmonic Theatre in the walls, and for arranging the Philippine debut of tenor Arthur Espiritu (for Year Pd. spine-tinted to sing at La Scala di Milan), my Music Impresario of the Year to Ray Simon of the RCS Music Center.

Soon happens to be the principal Diana of the Manila Symphony Orchestra, its is the same impresario behind other well-received recitals featuring Pascal Rieger and Victor Goldberg, among others.

My Singers of the Year are tenor Arthur Espiritu, baritone Andrew Fernando and soprano Cecilia Lopez Molina.

Molina was a rare jewel of a recitalist at the "Kiss the Cook" intimate concert series, and crowned with her seldom-heard La Wally aria.

Espiritu and Fernando were standouts in their latest concert with the Manila Symphony Orchestra under Molina.

The tenor reprising Cuvee di maestro's aria, "Cessa di piu resistere," made up for the previous uncertainties of the first part. His other Filipino tenor, living or dead, has done justice to this fiendishly difficult aria,

ANDREW Fernando, Arthur Espiritu and Rachelle Ermillos in a closing trio from "Barbar of Seville"

and hearing it live from someone perfectly attuned to the Rossini and Mozart bits was a source of excitement.

But the guest appearance of baritone Andrew Fernando gave the concert a much-needed respite from the usual sour leaves.

Father's lament

Seducing his "Rosina" aria, "Dir prometeva il mio" to the late baritone Leonidad Virtu Fernando elicited awe and stunned silence as he gave justice to a father's lament over a lovelorn son. Affably.

By far, this is the best version of this aria I have heard from Filipino baritones, and the late Gerry Virtu would have been proud. Fernando's astounding vocal rendition showed he deserved more following in the country. Stand with verses and resonance.

Appearing with Espiritu in the "Pearl Fishers" duet by Bizet, Fernando showed how well he would blend with another singer. This duet showed the baritone and the tenor in their finest vocal form.

Returning in the last part with Rossini's aria, "A un dottor della mia sorte," Fernando exhibited as he remembered an audience that deserted the curtain organs of Christmas parties just to listen to three exemplary singers in this evening's opera roots.

This concert also showed the country is ready for a new version of "La Traviata," with Gremillet as Violetta, Espiritu as the dashing Alfredo, and Fernando as the perfect Germont.

This is something for the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to think about in 2011.

The year also saw the demise of both local and international icons in opera, such as baritone Leonidad Virtu and soprano Joan Sutherland and Shirley Verrett.

CYRIL Pabar

Ballet Philippines wins top dance awards in 2010 Namcya

TOP DANCE company Ballet Philippines bagged major honors in the 2010 National Music Competition for Young Artists (Namcya) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Soloist Cyril Pabar and company member Philip Bacaners garnered the first and third placers respectively, with company member Nilo Winlor receiving the Lova Adamos Award for the Senior Division.

Pabar joined Ballet Philippines in 2003 as a scholar and was named soloist this year. He has undergone training under Nanette Jurado, Victor Ursabia, Jeffrey Espejo and Alan Trinidad. His win came at the heels of a first-place finish by Ballet Philippines' Antonio Bagio in last year's Namcya.

Bacaners displayed the feat he first achieved in the 2007 Namcya for placing third in the Junior Division.

Most recently, Bacaners and Pabar conveyed the title role in Ballet Philippines' "Peter Pan," alternating with Jean Marc Cordova.

Honored with the Lova Adamos award for the second time was Philippa, who was recognized as the Most Promising Young Female Dancer in the 2009 Namcya, Junior Division.

Pabar, Bacaners and Winlor bested 26 other finalists this year. They joined a roster of Namcya winners who went to become top artists in the local and international performance scene, including principle Cecile Licad, Raul Bolinao and actor Bolgaric soprano Analiza Fernandez, cellist Raimel Bolipata, and flautist Antonio Maggio.

Three Namcya triumph cops off a highly successful year for Ballet Philippines, with Candice Adea winning the silver medal and Jean Marc Cordova becoming the first-ever male Filipino ballet dancer semi-finalist in the 2010 International Ballet Competition.

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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Rediscovering Lee Aguinaldo

By Ted Esmeralda
Contributor

THE LEE Aguinaldo retrospective at Ayuntamiento Art Gallery has been longtime coming. It was originally proposed by the curators, Ma. Victoria Herrera and Clarissa Chikiamco, in 2007.

The show was meant to be its dream, a peek at his drawings, small mixed-media works and letters which have been kept all these years by Lee himself and, after his death, by his partner, Mollie Arthur.

But it seemed an injustice to be reintroducing Lee, one of the most important Philippine modernists, to a new generation without showcasing his large-scale "Llanos" series and "Ulirang Inang" series. Thus the decision was made to include some of his large canvases in an attempt to show the range of Lee's oeuvre and "Lee Aguinaldo: In Retrospect" was born.

Aguinaldo's life was convoluted—that is most definitely what sticks in the mind of the general public for at least those who have heard of him.

But research also revealed Aguinaldo's consistent passion for art. He developed a facility for it as a child, but it was when he was in military school (the ideal regime solution for rehabilitating children of affluent families of the time) that it truly took hold of him.

In his correspondences with his mother, he expressed his desire to attend the Art Students League in New York. But this was not to be because his role was to take over the family businesses. (They had the biggest department store of the time as well as interests in logging, livestock and pearl farms.)

Passion that consumed

Aguinaldo nevertheless educated himself. He read voraciously about art, art history, and the new movements in thinking, sought out intellectual discussions and critiques of his artworks. At the end of the day, he could not ignore his calling to be an artist.

After receiving several awards and measuring critically acclaimed shows in the 1960s, he gave up his position in the family business, and, to a certain extent, in the family, to pursue the passion that consumed him for the rest of his life.

The exhibit is a survey of Aguinaldo's artistic career, featuring works in different media, with equal attention given to his famous abstractions and watercolors as much as his less-known mixed-media works.

"Self-Portrait"

The first image to confront the viewer is a small self-portrait of Lee with his tongue sticking out à la Albert Einstein. Beneath this is the quote: "What keeps me alive is learning that I am capable of surprising myself, of being able to find out that you're still able to be capable of being inventive, creative and energetic."

The photo and the quote set the tone for the exhibit and the image of the artist that the curators seek to present.

He had a sense of humor and he was driven by a passion for creation and experimentation...the large canvases in the first area of the exhibit, definitely a testament to his energy and verve.

Two 244cm-by-244cm trip paintings, in all their abstract expressionist glory and one enormous canvas (3.3 x 2.5 m), filled with black paint by flicking paint from the palette knife onto the surface, show his early forays into abstraction very much influenced by the contemporary American movements.

Hard-edged abstractions

His humor is also seen in a series of image transfers of Picasso that he did for the "Homage to the Masters" section of the show). Two are recognizable photos of the famous artist. The last one, "Picasso Looks Like Rembo," is a partial transfer in which the resulting image of the head was done, indeed, resemble former UN Secretary-General Carlos P. Romulo.

The rest of the show are his hard-edged abstractions and color-field paintings. These works catapulted him to international fame with his participation in the 1971 Sao Paulo Biennale and numerous of these works in a 1997 issue of Art International.

Three of the works that were sent to Brazil are present in the show, including "Llanos" No. 70, a striking, seemingly simple painting with a sky-blue ground.

REDISCOVERING D4

"EXPLOSION" No. 111

"BUTCH with Cupcake Wrapping"

Against our will and better judgment, we have arrived at the conclusion that Lee Aguinaldo is, alas, a genius"—from a certificate by Fernando Zobel, Emmanuel Torres and Roberto Chabet

Our rea

l choice.
Real Leaf

'Festivale' art show at Art Center

"PERFECT Tandem," by Alju Pingol.

SALIDE JOAQUIN, with Galerie Francesca, will open its yuletide art exhibit, "Festivale," on Dec. 28-6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Art Center of SM Mega mall.

Among the major works on exhibit are Jowel Bacnet's "Pinoy Festival," a colorful interpretation of a regular day at the public market, and "The Pinoy Harvest." Oliver Aail' paintings from Bontoc include depictions of farm animals: "Hunters, Hen and Chick," "Hen and Chick," "Pig and Piglet" and "Oxen."

Bontoc, 35, draws much of her paintings' characters from scenes from her own impressionable childhood; it particular focuses on the lively market scenes from her hometown in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Bonifacio works are joined in this exhibit by those of Annalee Bangsilan, Alfonso Ravena, Alju Pingol, Raul Olbinilla, Ernesto Ledesma and Nick Campos.

Bangsilan was inspired to work on his art through the influence of his cousin, artist Jerry Morada, a mainstay at the Guaveco Group of Artists. Utilizing a highly abstracted pattern of flat primary and secondary color tones outlined in black, Bangsilan renders human figures and landscape in a highly linear and planar manner that vaguely reminds one of the patterned designs of the late New York-based graffiti artist Keith Haring. And yet, the sensibility of Bangsilla's approach is based on a sensitive appropriation of Indo-art motifs and children's art. Bangsilan's intriguing "Bayanihan," "Lechon Festival," "Nicolo Concert" and "La Mesiquo."

Alfaro Ravena, in works such as "Idyllic Afternoon" and "Kings," exhibit a strong influence from German expressionist artists. Alju Pingol's Marc Chagall-inspired works show floating figures in a dream-like idyllic world, such as men and his favorite beast of burden, the carabao, in "Perfect Tandem" and a love struck couple in "Serenade."

Raul Olbinilla's robust figures in "Father and Son" and "Musician" inspire a wonderful abundance and plenty set in a happy setting. Ernesto Ledesma's geometry works of stylized figures done in the patient and detailed manner of a true artist in works such as "Old Man Ice" and "Wanda." Still Campos' masterly cubist rendition of a rural scenery that is fast disappearing sets only against viewers to look back with nostalgia and fervent longing such as in his "Fish Harvest" and "Ballroom."

The exhibit runs until Jan. 8. Call 632) 725-9431; 725-9025 or 576-8393. Visit www.galeriefrancesca.com.

"EPILUC Afternoon," by Alfaro Ravena

Rediscovering . . .

From page D1

and four tangerine window like openings. It is amusing when seen from afar, compelling viewers to come closer and scrutinizing them with subtle gradations of color that only reveal themselves when one takes the time to savor more the work.

"Literal" No. 35 is also more fascinating when given the time to reveal itself. At first glance, it is just thick black and red stripes. On closer inspection, it is black and green and red and yellow and orange and blue.

The "black" stripes in the middle is actually a very dark shade of green, obvious only when compared with the black stripes at the end of the painting.

The "Circulation" series, also on the same section of the exhibition, displays Aganduru's mastery in handling colors, each hue steeped taking another so gracefully as like watching the colors of the sky change at sunrise.

"Pink Circulation" No. 4

Color field abstractions have often been derided for what appears to be very simple work not requiring much skill; but Aganduru's paintings would make admirers of any one says.

The exhibition gives us a sense of the artistic journey of Aganduru, presenting his stylistic changes, experimentations with painting and mixed media, image transfers and collages.

Most amusing

The work in the show also celebrates his interactions and collaborations with other artists. There is a collaged work titled "Homage to Simmons" which was purchased using cut-out images of photography taken by Siya Tyamzon of his family; a drawing made into a print by Brody Arriola.

Surprisingly, for someone known for his abstract works, Aganduru had and did quite a number of portraits. He had a face mask of sculptor Agnes Arellano; a mixed-media likeness of National Artist Botong Francisco; sketches of curator and art critic Emmanuel Torres and artist Roberto Chabet; and a mixed-media work of photographer Butch Balcazar.

A small alcove is dedicated to the drawings and sketches of Aganduru. These range from the fashion-inspired scribblings that were obviously done in his parents' home his skills, anatomical studies, comic and cartoon-like characters, and single-line drawings.

This is one of the discoveries of the exhibition, Aganduru's skill as a draftsman, and his ability to capture the essence of an image with the most minimal of means. That and the number of drawings he left behind, done in a thousand drawings, were motivations behind and fired by Aganduru.

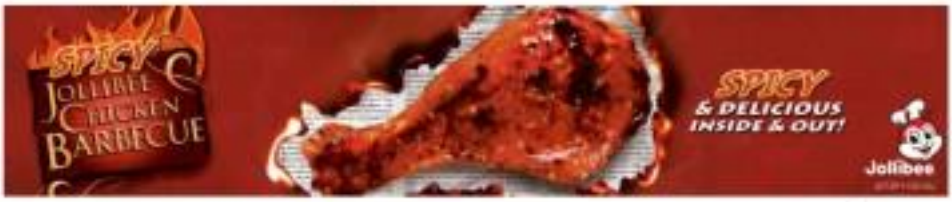
Most amusing is a "certificate of genuine" drawn by Fernando Zobel stating that "we, the undersigned have arrived against our will and better judgement at the conclusion that Leopoldo Aganduru # is, alas, genuine."

It was dated August 1966 and signed Fernando Zobel, Museum Director and; High Priced Artist; Eric Torres, Museum Curator, Influential Critic and Young Poet; and Chabet, UST Educator and Distinguished Artist."

Finds like this are a gift to art historians as it helps them piece together the art world of the time, the relationships between artists and their personalities. This certificate definitely throws the humor of three of the most influential figures in Philippine art.

"Leo Aganduru : In first repose" is on view at Ateneo Art Gallery till Feb. 5. The gallery is closed on Dec. 25, Jan. 1 for the holidays. Call 426-6488 or e-mail ateneoartgallery@ateneo.edu. A book on the life and art of Leo Aganduru to be published by Ateneo Art Gallery and Ideal Foundation will be launched in February next year.

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books



DOMINIC teaching young children the Truth

ALMS scene during Dominic's student days

A YOUNG Dominic is about to leave his mother, the Blessed Jane of Aza, who he is sleeping on the floor

Saint Dominic carries the torch anew in international film

By Eldric Paul A. Peralta
Contributor

THE DOMINICANS are at it again.

Last Dec. 11, the Lord's preaching friends embarked a brave retreat to further liven up an already splendid 800-year-old service in the Catholic faith when the Order's Philippine Province premiered "Dominic: Light of the Church," a full-length feature on the saint's life and earthly exploits, at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery auditorium of the University of Santo Tomas.

The film brings viewers back to late 12th century Spain, where the atmosphere reeks of war between Christians and Moors, famine and, as a result, skewed Christian doctrines brought by Cathari (known more widely as the Albigensians, though historically this may be misleading) to any a person desperate for spiritual answers to the hardships of the time.

It is against this background that Dominic is born in Caleruega in 1170, and it is in this same environment of blatant and widespread turmoil where he grows up, albeit in a well-to-do family, with a heart evidently for the suffering, and, to be given learned in the Catholic faith, an unflinching eye against doctrinal inaccuracy.

In going back, the film effectively sends its audience from the cliche present into the beginning of it all with the simplest and perhaps most effective working—and powerful—method: a remembering, a return to the roots, so that one can gauge more ably where to move on.

"Dominic" the movie embodies the attitude of remembering through the fictional character of Benito, a Dominican friar recalling his thoughts with the memory of his late master as if relaying his walking staff with the needed sturdiness, and his mind with the needed wit, before resuming his travel to preach.

Initially a documentary

The film project was the initiative of the Philippine Dominicans' Provincial Media Board, headed by Fr Jeffrey Ayuste, OP. He said that the filmmakers first set out to do a documentary on St. Dominic.

"Sources telling us about St. Dominic and his times are really limited, or at least inaccessible," said Ayuste. "We initially thought we would retell his story through the documentary medium, but we eventually decided that a feature film would be more accessible to today's audiences."

The scramble for locations, cast and crew, and a script, began in 2009. Fr. Member Isaia, OP served as film director.

"We scanned the story mainly

JANET 63

UNIVERSITY of Palermo scene

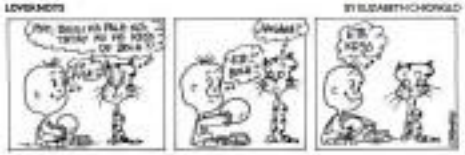
GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPPI — BY ED ABERA

PUGAD BARDY — BY PH. JUGOS

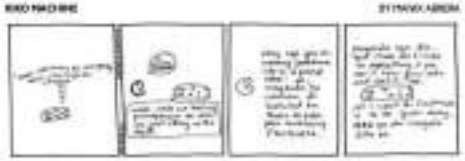
DICK TRACY

LOVE BOOTS — BY ELIZABETH HOROWITZ



BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

RIDO MACHINE — BY PAWA ABERA

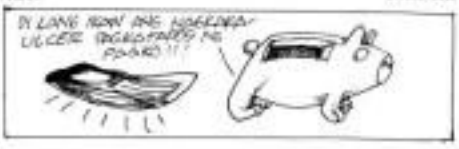


SEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

ANG DRAYBER — BY EDSELO & EDAHICE

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

TULDOK — BY MARA COLI



Lagingmakinig ng dosis sa ECG AM 10:05 AM-1:00 PM Lotes kategoring Biyernes

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

TOO BUSY TO DO? Rumi Lapaz, person. You have subscribers. Focus, you're worried about your health, or tonight even something that's related to your work or something. Be careful not to be late with someone.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Be patient with children today. You also have to adjust your time to an accident. Work day for your kids. Take your time and spend time with them.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Communicate with authority figures at home (parents or relatives) could be shaken and emotionally today. Others can be good to be settled. Discussed this with others needs a service.)

SINGLE (June 21 to July 22) Avoid arguments with siblings, relatives or even casual strangers. People are inclined to be critical and judgmental today. This is a bad combination. Be alert.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Arguments about possessions, money or even feelings could arise today. Be careful. Be extra careful that you don't speak too fast or harbor (including money).

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You may confront up on planned talks. Trust in others, increased responsibilities by others will add to your burden in some way. Take it slow and easy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 23) You might be worried about your health or that of someone. Organizing doesn't come as good as it used to. Don't be too critical. Be careful with your words.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 21) Avoid arguments with others today, especially in group settings. You might be in the process or a large gathering. Do not react or talk too much. Listening. Could be a stressful, eventful day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Don't go to sleep with authority figures today, especially your boss or a parent. Be careful of your spoken words. Be careful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You could be difficult to deal with authority figures today because other people's agendas or goals are not in harmony with yours. Be careful. Be cautious. Solve the opposite. People are critical and moody.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Caution about refund property, entertainment, loans, debt or monetary matters could seriously today. Protect your finances.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Do not work dealing with the general public today. It's also not easy dealing with customers and close friends. It Won't Stay Yours.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

3		5			9			6
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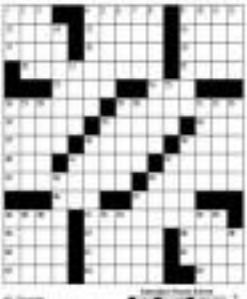
Difficulty Level ●

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Philippine Dominican Province to mark 40th year in 2011

By Lovise Liu
Contributor

ONE YEAR shy of reaching its fourth decade, the Dominican Province of the Philippines (DPP), or the Philippine Province of the Order of Preachers, recently marked its 39th anniversary with the view to remain abiding in relatively still young legacy.

The indigenous Province was founded on Dec. 8, 1971. Before that, Filipino Dominicans were part of the Holy Rosary Province, now commonly known as the Spanish Dominican Province, the original missionary province formed when the Dominicans first came to the Philippines in 1587.

The founding of the Philippine province of the Dominicans was a historic milestone in the history of one of the Church's greatest religious orders. It recognized the Filipino religious and their capacity to contribute to the Church and her mission.

During the 39th anniversary celebrations of the DPP last Dec. 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, at the University of Santo Tomas, the prior provincial, Fr. Quince Bellegarra, O.P. urged Filipino Dominicans to go back to the original charism of Dominicans worldwide—preaching and evangelization.

"Is preaching at the heart of our province?" Bellegarra asked. "I would reply, 'Yes.' Thanks be to God this is clearly stated in the vision of the Province."

"Preaching" means that the Dominicans should incarnate in themselves Christ, the foremost Preacher, "especially to the poor through an authentically Dominican and Filipino way," said Fr. Bellegarra, a former assistant to the Master General for the Asia-Pacific based in Rome.

Preaching should start in contemplation, in prayer and study, so that the Philippine Province is exerting a conscious emphasis on developing the intellectual life of the Dominican friars. Worldwide, the Permanent Commission for the Promotion of Studies has been internationally established for this.

"There is a strong recommendation for every canton of studies under a province and every academic institution under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order to engage in a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis," Bellegarra said.

Preaching, he explained, proceeds with the Mystery of the Word, which now has six priorities: preaching to children and youth; preaching through modern means of social communication; stewardship of creation; inter-religious dialogue; justice and peace; and ministry among indigenous peoples.

Institute of preaching

Bellegarra said that in the general chapters of the Order in Rome last September (which elected Fernando Cardenal Fr. Brian Cardoni, OP as the new Master of the Order), preaching is the fourth vice given particular attention for the first time. This means Dominican emphasis on schools for basic education and for centers for children.

A testament to the OP's commitment to preaching and scholarship is the Institute of Preaching established in 2005. The graduate school for training in philosophy, theology and homiletics will have its own building inside the Santo Domingo compound in Quezon City next year.

"Obviously the establishment of Institute of Preaching by the Philippine Province of is on the right track. It is the only center of the Order in our region," Bellegarra said.

The Institute (tel. 4139589, 7447004) offers certificate and Master of Arts courses for the religious, clergy and laymen.

Reorganization

The last general chapter in Rome also resolved to abolish—fostering and regional and vicariate arrangements by 2014 "to energize dominican life and mission."

This will have a bearing on the Philippines as well as on Dominican Province in Iberia, Venezuela, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Spain, Taiwan and Japan.

Of special significance to the Filipino Dominicans is the decision of the General Chapter that UST, the oldest university of Asia, which will celebrate its 400th anniversary next year, will be passed to the jurisdiction of the DPP by 2013, according to Bellegarra.

"It is to be understood that this change will not alter the characteristics of UST as a Pontifical Pontifical Institutions and to the Catholic University of the Philippines," Fr. Bellegarra clarified. "The Master of the Order will remain, too, as Grand Chancellor and matters to be dealt with the Province by a small Congregation of Catholic Education will still be processed through the General Curia of the Order."

The top Filipino Dominican explained the transfer would mean DPP cannot own the membership in the UST corporation, as present mentioned by the Master of the Order it will be given instead in the authority of the Philippine Province.

Today the Filipino Dominicans have several convents and houses (including two houses in Indonesia and Sri Lanka), formation houses, centers of studies, educational institutions, parishes, missions, shrines, and retreat centers.

Film producer

The Philippine Province, too, has also entered into international film production.

It has produced "Lumen: Light of the Church," the newest feature film on the life of St. Dominic de Guzman, founder of the Order of Preachers.

The Philippine Province produced the film locally in connection with the 800th anniversary in 2016 of the whole Dominican Order. (See related article.)

Saint Dominic carries the torch . . . from page E1

from the account of Dominican historian Mario Hamilton Ricaro," Father Ezeta said.

The screenplay would be written by Filipino Lamberto Blanche.

The success of the filming itself was attributed by the team to Divine Providence. The days allotted for principal filming and photography: 38. With a limited budget, the crew needed all the help they could get.

Initial screen tests were done using audition videos sent early through Youtube. When the crew arrived in Spain, they were still making casting calls. They had met most cast of the movie, yet. The mayor of Calzadenegra was said to have made the rounds of the town, making calls.

In all, there were 13 Filipinos, six French, and six Spaniards. There were rare circumstances for France, and one for Spain—Spanish actor Jorni Pastraj, who ended up in the film role.

Translators came from the ranks of the cast themselves, sowing the need for professional consecrated translators. Even the nuns of the Dresdillar monastery where a part of the filming took place, called on their persona and families for help.

Genuine feel

Despite the odds, "Dominico" is not exactly an amateur production. The cast, script and locations lose

Lionggonen at José

Alfredo Lionggonen showcases his latest sculptural works depicting nature in "Hading Pabak, Aldy sa Bagyo," ongoing at Gallery José (ITC Gil Fernando Ave., Taguig City-Ortigas, Mandaluyong; tel. 3942488.)

BY ALFREDO Lionggonen

Group show at Bagaic's Café by the Ruins

"Pusong Pino," by Bobotti Lobarga

"Pinoys from the Greenhouse," an exhibition celebrating food, life and me-ani-mo-nurturing, has been extended until Dec. 28 at Café by the Ruins (Chuming Street, Baguio). Featured are new works by Norman Chow, Babotti Lobarga, Ibus Mendoleras and Yudilen Chavez-Pare.

'Sisik' at Silverlens

Silverlens Gallery (2/F, YMC Bldg. II, 2330 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati; tel. 8183203, 3811...

Visual Arts

until 31. www.silverlensphoto.com is celebrating its sixth anniversary with the group show "Sisik." The fascinating photographers are Frankie Callaghan, Wawi Navarroza, Neal Oshima, Rashel Rillo, Steve Tirona and Denise Walden. "Sisik" is curated by Silverlens' director Isa Lorenzo. The show is extended until Jan. 19.

Sculptures at Altro Mondo

Bo Cabuguan, Mideli Sil Farol, Renaldo Ong, Alok Pagarigan and Merry Puerto present their sculptures in "Tropos," ongoing at Altro Mondo Arte Contemporanea (2/L, Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati; tel. 9215270-71) until Dec. 28.

Camacho, Taniguchi at Duemila

"Make-believe Paradise," a joint exhibit by Bea Camacho and Maria Taniguchi, is on view at Galeria Duemila (218 Loring St., Pasay; tel. 8318886; e-mail duemila@eyedentity.net; www.galeriaduemila.com). Video and installations artist Camacho is known for handmade shoes. Her 15 works on paper are executed through laser-cut processes. She delves on relationships, but this time these geometrical lines, tangents, intersections, planes and asymptotes, Taniguchi presents five new paintings which explore ideas surrounding the relationship between abstraction, dimensionality and arrangement.

BY MICHAEL Borbon

Group show at Sigwada

"Singlong Salonlon" group exhibit is on view at Sigwada Gallery (1301 Scopelli and Tayuman Streets, Manila). Participating Bicong Among artists are Dave Ayende, Sarly Cruz, Artemio Conde, Michael Toribio, Marlon Posecy and Brian Villareal.

Ronald Ventura at Drawing Room

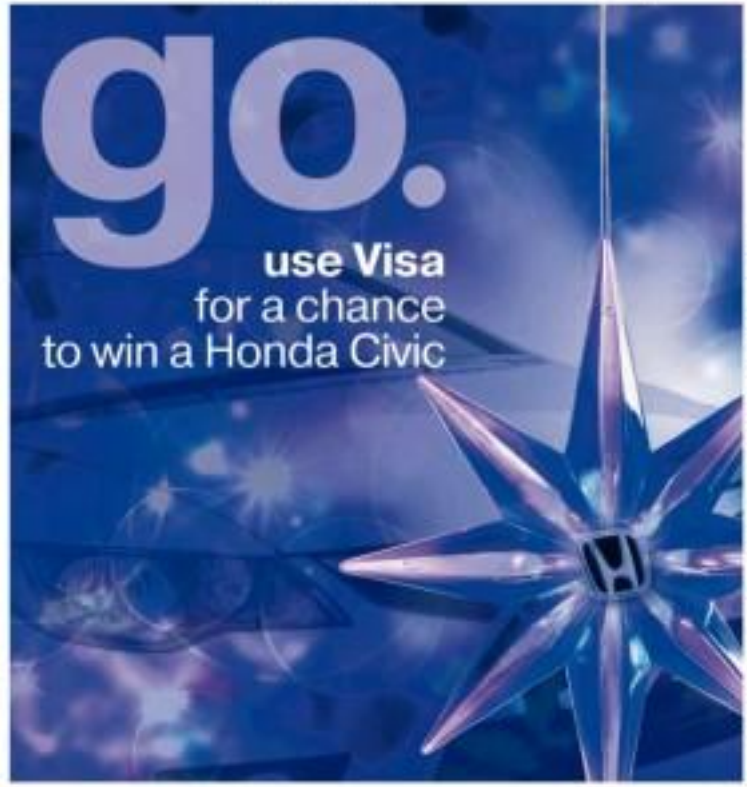
"Converging Nations," featuring paintings by Ronald Ventura," is on view in The Drawing Room (1001 Metropolitan Ave., Makati). Call 8570086.

Bagias at Arna

Arlo Bagias presents his paintings in "My Life is Circles," ongoing in Galerie Arna (Artwalk 4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong; tel. 4122151, 4109869; e-mail info@galeriearna.com). Show runs until Dec. 31.

"MY DAD'S Sewing Machine"

ARTIST-PHILOSOPHER Tam F. Aurelio meets a courtesy call recently to the Philippine ambassador to Seoul, Korea, Luis Cruz. Present are Elaine Aurelio, Mary Diane Aurelio, the ambassador and the artist.



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DOMINIC as a young canon, discussing doctrine

Saint Dominic carries . . .

From page E3

themselves entirely to the execution of the Ofm, giving it a genuine sacred feel.

"We filmed in the actual monasteries of Silos, Segovia and Pesaillac, among others," Father Aylesa said.

Except for some over-extended scenes (Dominic's self-flagellation, as well as the conversion of the Cathari innkeeper), the cinematography is fine. Panoramic shots of the Spanish and French countrysides come across impressively.

But the movie has to grapple with sound recording issues, which compound the International cast's heavy French and Spanish accents. The problem is somehow remedied by the English subtitling.

The movie follows all the major points in the saint's recorded life: from his refusal to use his bed as a child, to his education in Palencia where he consistently sold his books for money he could give as alms to the poor, and his recruitment to the priesthood by Bishop Diego of Osma, and eventual selfcreation.

Also shown are his eventful love for nature; fondness for children; the impact of his eloquent teaching on his first convert from Carbarone; and, most of all, his dogged devotion to fight heresy by going into the world himself, spreading true Roman Catholic doctrine.

This last is highlighted by his extremely risky splitting of the three brothers (Ordo Praedicatorum Praedicatorum (Order of Friar Preachers), assuring his fearful young brothers that this is the only way their preaching would reach all ends of the earth.

Powerful preaching tool

This rule would eventually be vindicated by time. At the turn of the third millennium, the Order of Preachers had 6,000 friars; 4,000 contemplative nuns; 35,000 sisters in the apostolic life; and 80,000 lay members in around 80 countries.

Its fruits stopping, the Swords of God (as the Dominicans have come to be known, a play on the Lord "Dominus") and canine or dog ("canis"), as well as a reference to the names of Dominic's godmother during his baptism when she saw a star, or torch, on the baby's forehead) continue their preaching to the new millennium, but with more modern evangelical tools.

The powerful message of "Dominic: Light of the Church" is an uncomplicated one. It is the story of a man so venerated even in his lifetime, and yet so simple that he did not wish even the recognition given to his brave men. His wish: wish as open everyone's eyes to the truth in an eternal, one God, and by means that reached every single member of society.

Remembering St. Dominic, pious and steadfast in his mission, might just help renew people from today's blind adherence to an ephemeral world.

"Dominic: Light of the Church" is set to go on an international movie concours starting January. Call the Provincial Media Board of the Dominican Province of the Philippines at 7437562-63.

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End of 'Win na Win'

SE CARTER, what you joke about. Its hosts, led by Ricci J. Puno and Pokwang, had been getting about the emotional demise of the AXS-CBN noontime show "Pilipinas Win na Win" for the past few days. On Friday came an announcement to see this figuratively chalked. The show will end on Dec. 31, 2015. "In the meantime, an extended 'Showtime' will occupy the slot" vacated by "Win," said Vicky Morales, head of the network's corporate communications.

DID YOU KNOW...

Indie spirit 'Shakes' franchise

By Krystel Sun Diego Jr.

TWO INDIE directors, Jerrold Tarog and Yupol Lee, helmed episodes of the horror trilogy, "Shake Rattle & Roll," now on its 12th edition. (The third episode was merged by actor-turned-debuting director Zoren Legaspi.)

Tarog, one of 25 independent filmmakers honored as the first honorees Indie Tribute recently, drinks his translation to the entertainment, in this particular Regal production, was smooth and seamless.

He also directed "Senior Year," granted 'B' by the Cinema Evaluation Board and one of five to also premiered before the MMFF.

Work in the mainstream and indie scenes are "practically the same," he points out. "There's just more people to talk to. There were some creative and technical aspects I had to let go of ... but I'm glad the producers allowed me to rewrite the script. In the end, the objective, whether indie or mainstream, remains the same: We have to come up with a good film."

To-do list

He feels "honored" to be part of the "Shake" franchise, which was started by indie pioneers Mondayitan or Peque Gallaga, Emmanuel H. Borlaza and the late Ishmael Bernal. "It's always cool to be part of some cinematic tradition. But I never imagined I'd be doing horror so soon. It was on my to-do list, so I figured I might as well do it. I don't shy away from a good challenge."

Until there were challenges aplenty on the set.

"It was a series of firsts for me: First time with major prosthetics, first time with animals and heavy prosthesis, first time to shoot in a morgue with a real corpse nearby. (But last but not as funny and horrible as it sounds.)"

To think that Tarog is no big fan of the supernatural. "I'm not superstitious. If I see an actual ghost, I'd probably be like Fox Mulder on 'The X-Files' and be all giddy. 'Trust Us' now to Enzo finally and he despised right away."

Although he gets heard with ghosts and demons, he prefers thrillers that are "literate and physical" (like "28 Days Later," "The Descent") or tragic and elegant (like "Candyman")."

Mood and tone

Entitled "Pamamaya," his episode is about a nurse (Carla Abellana) who finds herself working for a family of otherworldly creatures.

He believes that "horror is one of the best genres to exercise cinematic craft [in]. You have to pay attention to mood and tone, layer after after to hold back and when to let go. You have to choose your angles wisely to maintain suspense. It was a challenge to hold it all together," he explains.

Tarog remembers watching snippets of the earlier "Shake" installments as a kid. "It was off a bits. But I can recall the Manilyn Reynes episodes."

Like Zoren, he didn't relish being called Direk. "Among the actors, it was Ordette Rhaza who had the easiest time calling me by my name. Sid Lucero found it hard until the end. But the reader cast was great. They enjoyed the scares, the blood and gore. Everyone seemed to have good fun despite the demanding scenes."

Is he saving to make more mainstream flicks? "I'm keen to make movies. It doesn't matter if it's commercial or outside, indie or mainstream. I'll do it, if it's worth doing."

E-mail: bayansandiego@inquirer.com

Proud to be Pinoy

Darren Criss, 'Glee's' newest cast member, is half-Filipino and proud of it

By Amy Moura
Contributor

AND SOAR at year's end, it would be wise to reflect on the stardom of young Filipino talents making waves in the international entertainment scene. Charice, Bruno Mars ... now there's Darren Criss.

Yes, Glenda, the curly-haired, green-eyed heartthrob—who starred not as a guest character, a gay teen named Blaine, and is now the show's newest regular star—is of Filipino stock, and very proud of it.

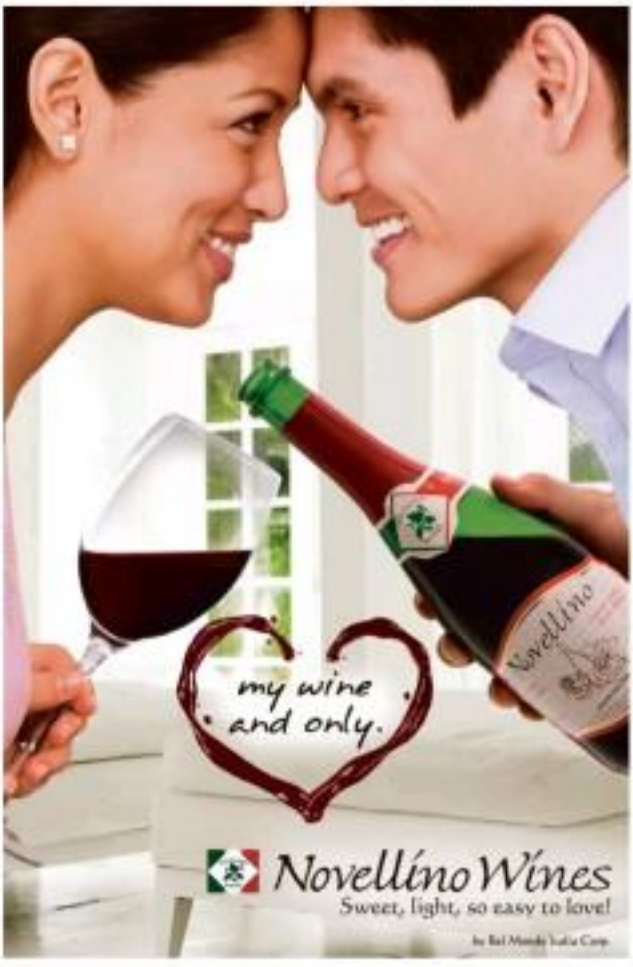
Gregarious

In town for a set of Christmas shows for Ayala Malls, the gregarious Darren sat down with the press only hours after he landed in the morning, and only a few minutes before he and his team started rehearsals for his show later that afternoon. Darren, however, is bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as only a 'boy next Hollywood prospect can be, and was in the mood to talk about his personal adventures in Makati.

"The last time I was here was for my cousin's wedding, about two years ago, and it's so good to be back," Darren told this writer in a one-on-one. "My mom is Cebuano, 'born and raised in the Philippines, and she came to the United States when she was an adult. She's the youngest of seven, so I have a lot of family in Makati, a lot of them have moved on to other countries but many of them are still here. My dad's side is rather tiny, so I feel like a great part of my family is Filipino. I love the Filipino community so much."

The last time the Filipino community is, in his words, "extraordinarily embracing," is one of the reasons he had jumped on the chance to perform here, so close to Christmas, and while starting a child. "I wasn't born here, so I never realize any chance of being fully Pinoy, but I don't know," he said. "Every time I come here I feel like out of kinship with this country. Probably because Filipinos are so emotionally welcoming of any...

PHOTO P2



Danny Boyle film a true tale of survival

LOS ANGELES—Aron Ralston's harrowing saga in five himself after being trapped by a boulder is depicted in Danny Boyle's extraordinary "127 Hours."

The American mountaineer, portrayed by James Franco in a Golden Globe-bid Sony Pictures nominated per he names, credits a bible verse he helping him survive.

Five days

Aron was hiking in a remote area in Utah when an 800-pound boulder slipped, pinning his right arm. Trapped for five days, Aron was forced to amputate his lower arm with a dull utility knife to liberate himself. While Danny shows the grisly self-amputation, Aron comes up with a moving resonance to the human spirit.

The film was based on Aron's memoir, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place." After freeing himself, the delirious and bleeding Aron had to rappel down a 65-foot cliff with one hand before he could step "into God's light," as Danny was quoted as saying.

Then he had to hike until a excruciating family from Europe chanced upon him, gave him water and alerted the authorities. Aron's mother, who was persistent in efforts to find her missing son, orchestrated the helicopter rescue which happened just in time.

"I felt much different with my belief that there are energies greater than our physical level of interaction," Aron said of his tale of survival in our interview. Dressed in a navy blazer, down shirt, tie and slacks, he quipped that he had on his "dress up duds".

—a prosthetic arm made of lightweight metal cable with a climbing claw. He was relaxed, boasting humor occasionally as he shared his inspiring story.

A Carnegie Mellon University alumnus with a double major in mechanical engineering and French, Aron quit his job at Intel to climb all of Colorado's peaks that are over 14,000 feet high.

"In my energy was diminished over time being trapped, I realized that I was no longer surviving on the last burden that I ate or the water that I was drinking—and I was no Sherpas—but my love. I believe in that scriptural verse that says 'God is love.' That's what this energy is ... it can give us stunning strength, courage and power, Christchurch-born Aron said. He's defiant, as I was time and time again, but I knew that I was not going to kill myself there.

"I was going to see it through. That was the first resolution. Inasmuch as I made that choice for life, I also had to come to a place where I realized I was not in control of this situation anymore. I had to find peace to get to the fifth day ... Whether I shrink my own arms or not—it was really not going to make much difference at that point. Fleeing given away that control and losing all right, I thought, I'm here on God's time. That's when I had the epiphany that I could actually get free not by having to cut through the bones but by using the boulder that was trapping me to break them. It was like I'm using the problem into the solution," Aron snapped the button by chewing himself repeatedly against the boulder. Then he cut through his limb with the knife and finally freed himself.

Taking responsibility

He disclosed: "I think that taking action was my response. I chose to take there is the canyon, created this situation that I got myself into and then I

BETWEEN a rock and a hard place." James Franco as American mountain climber Aron Ralston

JAMES Franco's character spit his job at Intel to climb all of Colorado's peaks that are over 14,000 feet high.

made a choice that I would get myself out of there. I took action. I didn't just say, 'Oh, it's not up to me anymore. I am just going to wait for God to save me' and sit back. I probably would have died if I gave up on the action part of it, too."

While he was recovering from his injuries, Aron had another realization. "I came to terms with the fact that, wow, this is something more than just for my family and me," he said. "It was a very profound experience for me, one that deepened my relationships with my parents, sisters, loved ones and friends. It also became apparent that this was a story that could touch other people as well. When I was cutting my arm, I never thought that it would be something that anybody outside my family and sympathizers would care about. It was as surreal to be walking into a press conference [like this]. But I see that, wow, people care about this.

Letters

"In mom's mind I got thousands of letters that I realized there were people whom lives had been touched so deeply that they had been in a state of depression, so they described to their cards... that this story was a light in the darkness for them, that it saved their lives, too, because they decided not to kill themselves even though they had been previously canceled. That was when I knew that this was not something just for me to sit on and keep to myself. I need to be a fairly private person. But I realized that I needed to write a book, eventually to have a film made. To have this experience now, seven years later, it feels like it's very much a completion of that mission or the duty that I received with this gift. It's been my humble privilege to be able to give it to Danny and the team and they have been able to give it to the audiences."

The film shows Aron, as played by James, making video diaries. He had a video camera with him, including taping his farewell to his family in case he did not make it. Of those video-taped messages, Aron said, "A lot of those messages that [James Dirdiren] were redacted, right off of the tape that I made, as when he says lines like, 'I'm sorry mom and dad...

CONTINUED ON F3

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

Greenhills Cinemas
THEATRE-MART
PROMENADE

Eastwood Cinemas

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 SHANE BATTLE & ROLL 20
2 DALAW
3 ANG BUDMAY AT 32 ENTERING KABISOTE
4 FATHER JEJEMON

NEWPORT CINEMAS
1 DALAW
2 FATHER JEJEMON
3 ROSARIO
4 ANG BUDMAY AT 32 ENTERING KABISOTE

POWER PLANT CINEMA
DALAW | PG13
ANG BUDMAY AT 32 ENTERING KABISOTE | SPG
SUPERNIGHT AND THE GOLDEN GIRL | SPG
SHANE BATTLE & ROLL 20 | PG13
RPG METANOIA | SPG
ROSARIO | PG13

ABOH Reboot

Danny Boyle film true tale...

Posted at 12:01 AM

I've been doing all these things, going off, trying to prove to myself that I can do it all on my own."

Destiny

"I understand that this is something almost like a destiny, that it's like this boulder has been flying through outer space trying to find me. I looked back and I realized how I had been so self-centered in my life up to that point in my 20s. I hadn't appreciated my mom, dad, sisters, loved ones, friends and grandparents as much. That to a very judgment moment in the canyon. For me, that was almost as if there was an external reconnection, where I went from being someone who is just like a rock, by himself, isolated, to needing someone else."

Climbing still

Married since 2009 to Jessica Trusty, with a child who calls 1 in February, Aron does spending engagements around the world. He continues to climb mountains in the US, and in countries like Argentina and Morocco, as his he is more careful now, thinking now his family knows when he is headed. He plans to climb Mount Everest in the future.

Humbled

Aron is humbled that his story continues to inspire. "The people who really inspire me are the folks who come up to me after a speech or after some of the film's screenings," he said. "They are survivors, people who have survived cancer, who have gone through a trauma or a loss in their lives and they share a few moments of their stories with me. When they say that my story helped them in some ways to give them perspective about the loss of a friend in suicide, those things inspire me. I'm touched very deeply by people who open up. That's a lot of love when someone comments like that."

E-mail the columnist at rmquijos_1088@yahoo.com.

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ALEX Consuegra

Mikki Taylor

CESAR Montano

Stars recall lessons of 2010

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

AS WE APPROACH the year's end, I asked some celebrities to ponder the lessons of 2010 and envision the changes they will make in 2011. If there's one thing I learned in 2010, it's that we cannot change people, we can only manage them.

I wish I could have a "heart transplant" in 2011 as my foolish heart won't keep falling so hard. May you have learned all your 2010 lessons well, and here's to changes for the better in 2011. *Bisous/kisses*, Dollywood

CES DRILON: "In 2010, events in my personal and professional life taught me valuable lessons about ties, tolerance and patience. For 2011, my hope is to not forget the lessons of 2010. Hopefully, I'll be reaping the rewards of meditating for others and being tolerant and patient because mind you, it's not easy."

CESAR MONTANO: "I learned in 2010 that there are so many things we should do with quality time. Life is short. So many friends and people are close to our hearts and when they're gone we realize the things we miss doing with them. Maybe we're still so young and deep but it's still not enough because there's no quality vs. whatever we did. Next year I'll make and find quality—instead of just quantity—time."

RUFA GUTIERREZ: "The most important lesson I learned in 2010 is to live each day as if it were my last. Not to be afraid to love fully, take risks and follow where opportunity takes me. In 2011 I will save, work and travel more. An inspiration would be a house but not a be-all and end-all."

ALBERTO ROSALES: "This year I learned never to base my decisions on feelings and emotions. In all ways ask God and the Holy Spirit for guidance and wisdom in every decision, whether big or small. And that faith produces patience and patience builds character."

ALEX GONZAGA: "It's to love what I have and be satisfied with the blessings I received in 2010. In 2011 I'll learn: my being a single lady need try to cure."

HERLE TAYLOR: "I learned this year that life is ever evolving and dynamic and I should be open to improvement. What I intend to pursue in 2011 is to have an open mind free from the conventional thoughts that often restrict a person's achievement. I'm going to embrace and appreciate life even more as a continuous to embrace me."

Daddy's kids

My Nice Guide, Derma Villa, is mighty proud of her hubby (L-r: Enzo J. Capozzi for bagging the best Story and first Screenplay awards at the Festus.

"He deserves it not only for his talent but also for his tireless dedication to work," Derma said. "It's easy for anybody to top all three fields...Comedy, TV and movies like Carlo did. And it's also quite a feat that he has ensured the collaboration of his work is still patronized by the people especially the *masa*." Their kids Preathy and CJ are equally proud. "From the time I was small up to now, I always see him working," Preathy said. "When I'm asleep, he's writing. When I'm awake, he's directing." CJ added: "Dad is one of a kind. He's not only brilliant, he also has a heart of gold. Kahit kay enemy or siya, dinidgan pa niya in the words I grew up seeing his endless kind acts. I wish I could emulate even half of my dad's qualities."

E-mail the author at wateringhole@inquirer.com.ph/yahoo.com

JERICHO Rosales

Patience is a virtue: Jake winning the hearts of Melissa's parents

By Hannah L. Cruz

PATIENCE is a virtue that Jake Cuenca has shown to the parents of his rumored girlfriend, Melissa Ricks.

"They now allow me take their daughter out," Jake told Inquirer Entertainment at a movie press conference for his movie "Imperfect Day and the Golden Rice." "They used to be so strict about it. Little by little I'm being given the chance to prove I'm worthy of Melissa's love."

Jake has admitted dating the PR/print/ad/TV actress for over a year now. The two first met in 2006 while working on the fantasy adventure drama "Deles Descalzo," with Mats Ivanis playing the lead role.

"It took almost every day. Which we got the chance. Hihi and I met out at least three. We don't have a favorite hangout place yet. We're still trying to establish a routine. We're not even had the chance to watch a movie yet," the actor said. "I'm close (Melissa's parents) and I am OK. I can't say we're already close because she's out every by is the times, but we talk when we get the chance."

Melissa, however, is "extremely close" to Jake's mom. The actor even met his parents (Steve Wellington Ricks Jr. his girlfriend. "Belong here ella," he stressed. "They're cool parents. They allow me to be

MELISSA Ricks

JAKE Cuenca

independent and support the decisions I make. My mom and dad feel communicated through those words. When my parents came home after living in Spain for many years, I brought Mel to have dinner with them. I was surprised—close pala ang dalawa. I learned that they also used to talk using webcam."

He added: "Melissa is really a special person to me. More than anything, I want to be a good influence to her. I still her to prioritize her work. When time permits, I ask her to go on church with me. I'm really very spiritual. I also encourage her to implement a close relationship with her family."

Tweeting from jury duty . . .

Please see page P6

attorney. Don't like his accent. Subject? Going with INNOCENT."

A day later: "I'm confusing up defense with my jokes. Judge just glowered. Defendant finds me fun

ny. How gay?" Two hours later: "Other jurors are stupid. First, they don't believe in 'hunos.' Plus, they want me to put my imaginations away."

A spokesperson for Martin said he was a juror awaiting arraignment—she wouldn't reveal when. "He is not actually tweeting during a trial but is on jury duty. He's making jokes that are really funny, nothing actually factual though," she wrote in an e-mail to Reuters Legal. *Reuters*

Proud . . .

From page F1

one, specially in the entertainment industry. I couldn't be happier to be here."

Even before landing "Glee," Darren has had a sizeable, if underground, fan following, which came about when he and his college friends from the University of Michigan theater department decided to shoot a Harry Potter parody musical they produced on YouTube. With songs written, produced and performed by Darren, the project, "A Very Potter Musical," got millions of hits, and gave birth to two other musicals, also posted on YouTube. When they hosted a campaign to release the soundtrack albums, one became the very first cosplay musical to land in the Billboard and Winter charts.

DARREN'S ALL-ORIGINAL for following.

DIY advocate

Which makes Darren an advocate of doing things yourself. That being said, he pointed out, "There are no rules in that genre. People are always saying, 'Yeah, you want to go on YouTube first,' and you know, some of it it's warranted. I've just been very very fortunate and I can't stress that enough. The strength that our musicals have had—the ones I helped take with my company, Star Bid Productions—was completely organic. We had no idea people would like it as much. And 'Glee' happened because I auditioned for it. I don't think anyone in 'Glee' knew about that other world that I had.

"My recommendation is that in this day and age there's a big do-it-yourself mentality. We made that thing ourselves, produced it ourselves. If you want to do something, it's very easy with the tools available now. Create, create, create."

Even after becoming her Hollywood property, Dreiza is devoted to his other creative pursuits, and with the same collaborators. "My friends from Michigan States all have very supportive, and I'm still working with them. In fact, our fourth musical comes out in February. It's called 'Scumbag,' and we're rehearsing now," he said, and added deprecatingly, "At the end of the day I'm just some resident guy, not really any different...the same old sorted dookish guy."

Independent

Wait, don't see all? "Then, pending my schedule, I'll be working on a full-length studio album," said Darren, who released an EP of five songs as an independent before TF beckoned. "That was always gonna happen, then I got cast in 'Glee,' which kinda stalled it for a bit. Depending on what time I have, I'll be going back and forth between 'Glee,' my company and my musical and (he at least, are) between those three. I'm keeping myself pretty busy. It also depends if I get a film this summer. I'm always auditioning."

With such a wealth of talent, it seems Darren's path is full of possibilities, but will he ever choose between acting and music? "I'm devoted to both. But . . . who ever thought I would be doing both at one television show?" he asks. "I wanna have my cake and eat it, too. Who doesn't? Any one-trick pony, I'm gonna keep going until one or the other makes me decide."

Loves Blaine

He loves the role of Blaine, and doesn't fear typecasting one bit, despite playing a gay soloist. (Destiny is straight.) "I felt he more a gay teenager in a show which 10 years old than Alan Alda, who plays Hawkeye, is a homophobic bully, or Heather Morris is a dumb blonde. We're all playing parts and serving the story" he pointed out. "I've been handed the fantastic opportunity to play an incredibly strong character. I still cringe enough from Jacqueline Obradors in it, too. I mean, I play him, but taking that away from the equation, I think he plays such an important role in what's going on in our world, what's going on with young people. The things he has to say are connected the gay topic, and into all sorts of exclusion and alienation and inclusiveness and acceptance."

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Traveling TV exec's job filled with adventure

By Bernie G. Velarde

AS VICE president and head of operations for GMA International, Joseph Jerome Francia has logged, as he puts it, "so many hours of flying time."

The job is one he sometimes loathing but, he notes, "It's not as glamorous as some may see it." Adventure has certainly come with manoeuvres for the intrepid 40-year-old network executive.

Francia shares a few unforgettable cases with business frustrations:

"From the streets of Milan to the Hong Kong harbor, I am invariably asked, 'Pinoy ba?' Ok. I would hear some kababayan unintentionally overhearing and I myself would ask, 'Pinoy dyan?'

"The very many Filipinos would embrace a kababayan, even one they don't know, you'd think they were meeting at the neighborhood comer store and not in a subway somewhere in Europe."

Movie material

His memories are not always heart-warming: "Being mistaken-looking can make you a target in intimate photos. Europe," Francia relates. "On my last trip to London, I thought I had the great fortune of being followed by a blond next to the American Embassy. While taking a stroll one morning in the park nearby, I was casually taking photos of... leaves on the ground when I was accosted by two police men. They asked to see my passport and peppered me with questions. Apparently, it was against the law to take photos of the American Embassy. I showed them all the photos in my camera—mostly of myself as a solo traveler and, yes, dried leaves, in my feeble attempts at photo compositions. They let me go."

Some are suspense-filled material: "Driving through the desert roads of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia after sundown was a new experience for me. There were hardly any cars along that long stretch of highway till the way to Riyadh. What if one car broke down and we got stuck in the middle of the desert in the dead of night? It took just seven hours but felt like the longest drive I had ever taken. Next time, I will definitely join fly."

Area of responsibility

Francia's area of responsibility is to oversee all head of the international team based in Manila (over-500M Pinoy TV, the Philippine network's first international channel, and GMA Life TV, which addresses female audiences abroad.

Launched in February 2008, Pinoy TV has an estimated 261,000 subscribers in the US, mainland, Canada, Japan, Guam, Saipan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Diego Garcia, 16 countries in the Middle East, 11 in South Africa, and 40 European countries in Europe. Life TV was launched in February 2008.

TAKE FIVE

When TV5 launches its own global channel, as its top officials have told business, where would Pinoy TV be, in relation to the new player and the perceived leader in that area, ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel?

TFC was absorbed at its over a decade. Pinoy TV will cater to remote audiences in the time of Filipinos abroad. We will continue providing high-value news and entertainment programs for expat Pinoys. That's the time that GMA Network can do for subscribers to continue perceiving us to.

Pinoy TV will also further strengthen its local will-renews, is to retain current subscribers and continue to grow its subscriber base. One of the is being sensitive to our viewers' diverse needs. We recently launched separate program schedules for each of the three major geographical markets we are active—North America (United States and Canada), the Middle East and Europe, and the Asia Pacific Region.

Drama/Fiction/Comedy accounts for 45 percent of Pinoy TV programming. Could you break this down further? What is screened by Lifestyle/Human interest, which is second in line at 20 percent?

Pinoy TV takes in programming primarily from GMA 7 Manila. The diverse mix consisted of all the top-rating soaps on the prime-time block, plus all-season shows and our new Korean series.

Comedy includes such titles as "Bubble Gang," the Parejoke classic "Show Me Mahiwaga," "Pepito Manaloto" and "Comedy Bar."

Under Lifestyle and Human Interest are award-winning public affairs programs led by "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho," Mike Enriquez's "Tonight with Mike Enriquez," "Pinoy Explorer," and Ricky Morales' "Wish Ko Lang." Documentary-format shows like "I Witness," "Reporter's Notebook," "Born to Be Wild" and "DYW Diaries" also fall in this category, plus the recently concluded reality program, "Survivor Philippines."

"Eat Bulaga!" is one of the network's biggest programs. And marketing for the station's own productions, "Forty Filipinos," was only he described as aggressive. Yet Manila Variety makes up only 9 percent of your program "exports." Is there a significance to this?

Aside from "Eat Bulaga" and "Forty Filipinos," (article) guest shows like Willie Revillame's new program "Ang Tahanan Lahat Pinoy" and "Pinoy in the wall" are also on Pinoy TV. Taken together, these programs comprise 21 percent of total programming hours per week, the highest of all the program genres.

What has been the hardest (territory to penetrate so far?

Europe. We are making inroads now, but are encountered significant hurdles the operator entailed and the expanse of the continent. The Filipino community is spread out across many European countries, except for substantial concentrations in Britain and Italy.

And the easiest?

No market entry is easy but in terms of efficiency, I would say the Middle East. It was efficient because, with just one affiliate/partner (Orbit Showtime Network), a leading pay television operator in the region), we covered at least 27 countries right away, including the biggest ones—Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain. The Middle East has become our second-biggest and fastest-growing market.

Which other territories are you looking at?

That would be what we call "second-tier" markets in the South Korea, Israel, Taiwan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Diego Garcia, 16 countries in the Middle East, 11 in South Africa, and 40 European countries in Europe. Life TV was launched in February 2008.

JOSEPH Francia

countries with growing numbers of expat Pinoys that remain under-served in terms of Filipino programming.

In your experience, what is the best way to sell a global channel, aside from live concerts featuring network stars?

The network believes that in starting in good programming, and improving the quality of our productions are the best selling strategy that we can adopt. Aside from that, at the strategic level, it is emotional appeal. In a pay-television industry environment that I started out in, I was asked whether it was true that an international channel like Pinoy TV, which caters to a very narrow market, basically sells. Of course, that is true, because, my mom and I ask ourselves: How do we prove we are Kapuso in running and promoting an advertiser? Our channel must be something that reminds them of home; must be perceived as one that understands their struggles of living in another country. At the same time, the channel should be seen as celebrating their joys and triumphs. We've found that the theme, love of country and race, resonates well with our kababayan abroad.

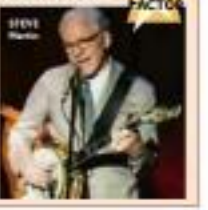
You also worked for a spell with the rival station (ABS-CBN, 1999-1997, when he was director of regional operations in 1995, at age 25). It's a small world—are you in touch with your counterparts in the competition?

I left in 1997, when I lived and studied abroad. I remain friends with a lot of my former colleagues there, although getting in touch has proven to be a challenge, given my hectic travel schedule and

Maybe kids will bring them closer?

Tweeting from jury duty: Just kidding?

CHEER FACTOR



LOS ANGELES—Leave it to Steve Martin to turn jury duty into performance art. Over the last two days, Martin has regaled his 2,000,000 plus followers on Twitter with observations inspired by the legal process unfolding before him.

Using his Twitter name @SteveMartinToTo, the comedian, a prospective juror, tweeted at 12:30 p.m. on Monday: "Begun! Feels like jury duty." Defendant looks like a murderer. GUILTY. Waiting for opening statements."

A follower, @brijesh713, warned: "If you're really on jury duty you could get into trouble tweeting from it AND commenting he's guilty!!! Careful Steve!"

He quickly responded: "The kidding should...." Then he kept on it: "Gee I thought you up for murder I mite eat to be African-American. I bet he murdered someone anyway."

While the jokes may be original, the conduct isn't. Boston Legal last week reported that judges granted new trials or even tossed verdicts in dozens of criminal and civil cases due to jurors' online diversions.

Martin's tweets read like a parody of the scourge of the tweeting juror. At 12:41 p.m. on Monday he wrote: "Prosecuting

TWEETING 24

LEARNING

Once upon a legend

A TEACHER WHO received 70 copies of the Inquirer every Monday for 12 weeks so her class could participate in the Inquirer in Education (IIE) Serial Reading Program wrote: "Thank you for giving me school a chance to learn for free. It's really a great help not only to the pupils but also to us teachers."

Supported for three years in a row now by Bench, the country's most popular lifestyle brand, the serial reading program this year had 20 journal readers with over 1,500 students in 14 schools.

The 12-part story revolved around a Cherokee Indian boy and his friendship with a pony Titled "Legend of the Pony's Tears," it was donated by writer Mary Hudden and illustrator Nick Wallace to the Inland Association of Newspapers (INAN-Dev) for publication in newspapers throughout the world to help highlight International Literacy Day in September.

The teachers who signed up to use the story in their English classes agreed that "Legend of the Pony's Tears" gave them an opportunity to introduce their students to the Native American culture and to a literary genre that mixed mythology with legend. They also touched on the concepts of death and injustice, among other things. (See related stories on Page 6 and 7.)

FROM top: Benito Legarda, Sunday Hill, N. Don Quis and Cubaleon Elementary Schools

There are two deaths in the story. In the beginning, Little Wolf is grieving over the loss of his father. Nearing the end, he loses

CONTD ON

Dear Mr. Ben Chan

THANK YOU for all the support and thank you because you gave us very nice news. From the newspaper we learned many things. We had many activities. When we receive a newspaper we are very happy because there are many lessons to learn like nouns, verbs and many kinds of words. We have no TV in my house. Every time I have a newspaper my father eagerly reads the newspaper. In the house all the work stops because all my brothers and sisters read the news because they get there assignments from the news. To the staff of that company, thank you and to Mr. Ben Chan.

Flora Mae C. Ongpao
Sorsogon

Many beautiful greetings of the day! I really want to thank you for giving us the free newspapers. This gives us the chance to read more, discover new words, and explore the exciting adventures of reading. I really appreciate your effort.
You're a good, kind man and I hope you never change.

Liana Marie V. Cabasar
Jose Magsaysay Elementary School

Thank you for supporting our IIE and encouraging children like us to upgrade our vocabulary by bringing newspaper to our class. Even though you are a successful man and respected person you still make time to help students like us to fulfill our dreams. I wish you the best in life.

Samantha Bethrol I. Villanueva
Bacnotan Elementary School

Tere poso kanang magpapasalamat akoh kag gyan sulyo kanat ng

pagbasa kon sa mga pagbasa ng mga nyo ay nakakapagbasa ng dyaryo at kon minsan dyan sa bahay ay nagbabasa ako ng mga balita kon may mga nabasa akong mga bagay na hindi ko pa alam. Mr. Ben Chan, ay marami pa kayong matutulungan. Mahilig kang kumain. Sagutin daw kami kapo ng pagkain kapo ng Pangalinan.

Mark Anthony C. Pascua
Sorsogon

GOOD news reaction elementary schools (clockwise from top left) Gov. P.F. Espiritu, Tabay sa Don Benon, Col. D. de Leon, Balungo, Cagayan; Jose Magnaoay, Norzagaray, Bulacan; Hollis E. Brown and Calasiao Calsag.

AVID awards winners of Reaction Paper Writing Contest and participating academes at the first Thought Leadership Forum in the country

LEADING AT THE FAST LANE: The winners of the Reaction Paper Writing Contest at the first Thought Leadership Forum together with AVID's team of top executives (from left, second row) Mr. Alan Avila, Vice President; Mr. Rommel Soto, President of Isuzu Motor Philippines; Mr. Stephen Ng, Corporate Secretary; Ms. Fe Perez-Aguda, President; Mr. Felix Ang, Chairman; (front row, left) Mr. Richard Lim, AVID Vice President Sales Promotions, Inc.; Chairman Emeritus; Mr. Michael Cua, VP of Motor Liaison Automobiles; and Mr. Hong Seng Lim, VP of Isuzu Motors. Proud with them enough are (from left, 4th to 10th from Ang) Chua, Jose Miguel Tan, Jillmon Angelo Rada, T. Kalaw, Jr. Place from UP Diliman; and Sean Theo Gonzales, 3rd Place from St. Scholastica's College.

Four-year-old Sorsogon IIE or Ben Chan Reading Place is a private school dedicated to helping the fast-growing auto industry to remain strong and adapt with the market and offer new opportunities for employment to the families of new automotive and commerce.

Creating an opportunity to engage different minds in the industry, AVID has been instrumental in promoting the country's economic situation, the Thought Leadership Forum became a fresh new knowledge base from the years looking to attend its coming. Part of the activities of the forum is the Reaction Paper Writing Contest. Participants are tasked to write a reaction paper on the topic "Philippine Automotive Industry: Driving Forward." The Reaction Paper Writing Contest has since been completed. The contest aims to encourage the students to understand the partnership connecting the auto industry and the market by learning the basics and perspectives of their personal and business success.

After screening the student-created compositions, the panel of judges composed of AVID officials and top executives from the industry, were tasked to give out top awards. However, AVID was so impressed by the three best reaction papers written by a student-to-student speaking relation, so much so that they decided to give out a total of six awards instead of the three originally planned. The panel of judges composed of AVID Executive Vice President Alan Avila, AVID Vice President Mr. Rommel Soto, AVID Corporate Secretary Mr. Fe Perez-Aguda, AVID Vice President Mr. Richard Lim, AVID Corporate Secretary Mr. Stephen Ng, Isuzu Motor Philippines Corporation President Mr. Felix Ang, Isuzu Motors Philippines Corporation Chairman Emeritus Mr. Michael Cua, Isuzu Motors Philippines Corporation VP of Motor Liaison Automobiles, and Mr. Richard L. Lim, Chairman Emeritus of Nursery Asia Resources, Incorporated.

The two Reaction Paper Writing Contest top six three winners commended by the AVID panel of judges were:

1st Place - Angelo Paolo T. Kalaw, Ateneo de Manila University Graduate School of Business Undergraduate Program

2nd Place - Sean Theo M. Gonzales, "Is Philippine Automotive Industry Ready for a Big Jump?", University of the Philippines School of Economics (Diliman)

3rd Place - Ivan Yves M. Sinculada, "Is Philippine Automotive Industry Ready for Transformation?", St. Scholastica's College

AVID also acknowledged the participating academes who joined the Reaction Paper Writing Contest and the Thought Leadership Forum in the country's premiere auto event, the De La Salle University-DLSU-Manila Bureau of Economics, the College of Business Administration of the University of the Philippines, the Department of Economics and Statistics Department of the Philippines, the International School of Economics and Business Administration of the University of Santo Tomas (UST), the College of Business Administration of the University of the Philippines Diliman, and the University of the Philippines School of Economics in Diliman, Quezon City.

Committed to building a better nation and developing driven professionals who will contribute to the growth of the Philippine economy and the automotive industry, AVID continues to create partnerships with the best of the best minds and dedicated to creating growth that will benefit the Philippines. Be the Thought Leadership Forum and the Reaction Paper Writing Contest, AVID has helped through on its successful efforts to create a strong foundation for the long-term growth and development of the national economy, and the empowerment of the Filipino race.

Playgrounds for the MIND

Member Schools

Danny Sasis of Angelicum College wins as Outstanding Peraa Member

IN ITS nationwide 2018 Search for The Outstanding Peraa Members (TOPPS), the Private Education Retirement Annuity Association (Peraa) declared Danny Sasis a full-time employee of Angelicum College - the winner (Administrative Staff Category) during the awarding ceremonies held at the Manor Polo Hotel in Cebu City during the 36th Peraa Anniversary Celebration last May.

Following the criteria set by Peraa, a committee from Angelicum College composed of Maria Theresa D. Fabillan, the subject coordinator of Nursing Fundamentals; Anna Bernette V. Tiuseo, a staff member of Human Resource Development; and Myrna P. Ulep, the Administrative Affairs Director conducted a search and identified Danny Sasis who started working in Angelicum as a janitor in 1992 but was able to pursue his educational studies despite his difficult struggles in life. He became a civil service eligible and Angelicum College promoted him in 1999. He worked as a staff member of the Office of the Registrar and enrolled in a postgraduate program - Master in Business Administration (MBA) of the Philippine School of Business Administration where he earned 24 units. As a non-teaching employee, he manifested competence, hard work, efficiency and proficiency in order to serve well. In June 2018, with Fr. Pio Bindoy O.L. Bautista, OP, PhD, the rector and president of Angelicum College appointed him as officer-in-charge of the Purchasing Office, which is under the Financial Affairs Division. The AC search committee submitted documents such as his performance appraisals that reflect his job performance, work attitude, work standards set by Angelicum College, his community linkages that include his initiative and enhancements, among other things. Fr. Ferdinand C. Bautista endorsed him as the employee Angelicum College wants to be recognized by its associates as reputable as Peraa. In the secondary screening, the members designated by the Peraa board of trustees also chose him for the final screening by the TOPPS panel of judges and out of the top three finalists chosen, Danny Sasis turned out the winner during the awarding ceremonies in Cebu City.

In his essay entitled "As a Private School Employee, I Contribute to the Development of a Nation," Danny Sasis said, "My accomplishment is nothing compared to others but I am still sharing such simple accomplishment because I believe that my story can reach the lives of simple people. In my lesson, I share my story to my children in order for them to give importance to their studies. To other people who sometimes feel that they are hopeless because they are poor, I dare to share with them my story to give them hope..."

It is true indeed that when Danny Sasis didn't let poverty hinder his dreams, he did contribute to the development of a nation.

ESCOLANIANS ATTEND JOB HUNTING SEMINAR 2018

Directed to their freshness efforts, the graduating students of Centro Escolar University hosted this year's Job Hunting Seminar held recently. Students from the nine schools and colleges of CEU attended separate seminars held in various rooms/auditorium. The activity organized by the University Student Council in partnership with the Marketing and Placement Department. Themed "Knowing Yourself on Track with Today's Job Market Dynamics," the activity aimed to generate awareness among graduating students on the fundamentals of the market and job search, as well as their future careers. Professionals from different fields were invited to share their insights and give tips to the Escolarians (students). Some of the speakers were Paulino Pabalinas, IT Biological Sciences faculty; Dr. Steve Rex C. Gan, Board of Dentistry member; Dr. Benilda S. Magno, Philippine Children's Medical Center deputy director; Mr. Romeo Gonzales Dr. Gonzales Cares; Asian Co-Institute Senior spokesman; Roberto Tavera, PhD, Manpower Registry

Directors Board; and John Christopher Castillo, RPM. Attached (not also) gave advice from their personal experiences. CEU Undersecretary of Sciences and Technology Job Hunting Seminar speakers - starting first from left) Assistant vice-campus specialist Marcos Steven Colindo, Roberto Tavera, and University Student Council president Mark Louie Mayuga - with (from left) 2007 dean Dr. Betty Lontoc, 2017 Student Council adviser Dr. Ma. Teresa Bautista, Marketing and Placement Department Placement section Ms. Mera Michiela Mendoza, and 2017 Student Council president Jessie Ramirez.

UE students shine in various arts contests

UNIVERSITY OF the East (UE) students excelled in various visual arts contests recently. Jose Ingcoron, a 2nd year BFA Advertising Arts student of the UE College of Fine Arts (CFA), emerged as the grand prize winner in the Student Category in the 2018 Visual Impressions Art Competition. Ms. Joanna Dell Ingcoron (fifth year, BFA Adv. arts second place in the 3rd Supersalik Digital Fine Arts Category), Rosalyn Grace Flores (2nd year, BFA Adv), Catherine Calpitcharon (2nd year, BFA Adv.) and Reymar Sanchez (2nd year, BFA Adv.) were all recognized as winners in the competition's Digital Fine Arts Calendar Category. Leonardo Montes III, a fifth-year BFA Advertising Arts student, was proclaimed as producing one of the six Best Entries in the 2011 Philippine Nippon Oil Company (PNOC) Calendar Painting Competition, in the "Turtle-Thief" Dive Spot 1st Place Calendar Design Competition conducted by Team Manila. Brent Carlos Catena, a UE BFA Advertising Arts sophomore, won second prize. Marinela Poon (4th year, BFA Adv) was the third prize winner in the 23rd Golden Duties Center Inc. Painting Contest. BM Painting freshman Jeanne Louise Gokiko won second place, Mario Nieto (2nd year, BFA Adv), was ranked third place. UE College of Computer Studies and Systems (CCSS) students Ana Jane Matillano, 2nd year BSIT, emerged as champion in the iTask Competition; and Jose Carlos Bernardo, 3rd year BSIT, won first place in the Photoshop Competition. All the UE Arts Alive College Intramurals 2018 Cup. For other details, call 301-4072 for UE-CAS-Conservatory and 301-0011 for CFA, or 735-9477 for CCSS, or log on to www.ue.edu.ph

AdNU president Tolli 2018 Awardee for Education

THE ATENEO de Naga University community congratulates Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ for being conferred The Outstanding Filipino (Tolli) Award for Education. The Awarding Ceremony, organized by the Junior Chamber International Senate (Philippines), was held on Dec. 8 at the Manila Life Auditorium, Intramuros Golf Course Center, Fifteenth Corporate City, Mandaluyong. The Tolli is an annual recognition to the country's most outstanding men and women, 40 years old and above, who have contributed significantly to the upliftment of the lives of their fellow Filipinos in particular, and humanity in general. Fr. Joel tirelessly devoted his life serving the poor, from Payatas to Bicol. He is known for his support of pro-poor programs in the Bicol region. Under his leadership, Manresa de Naga University has been transformed into a modern and technologically equipped institution in the Bicol region. The university is now enjoying Institutional Accreditation, Autonomous Status, Level 3 Accreditation and hosting Centers of Excellence and Development in four fields of expertise.

Future-entrepreneurs get tips from investment guru

IN LINE with Southville International School and Colleges' advocacy of building environmental and entrepreneurship culture, the College of Business Administration sponsored the Business Lecture Series (CE) recently at the Science Hall of the school. PSDF Center Advisor, Investor Life Academy, Investor Club Corporate Center, Mitsumi Corporate City, Mandaluyong. The SBA annually caps off tribute to the country's entrepreneurs who are 40 years old above, who have contributed significantly to the upliftment of the lives of their fellow Filipinos in particular, and humanity in general. Fr. Joel tirelessly devoted his life serving the poor, from Payatas to Bicol. He is known for his support of pro-poor programs in the Bicol region. Under his leadership, Manresa de Naga University has been transformed into a modern and technologically equipped institution in the Bicol region. The university is now enjoying Institutional Accreditation, Autonomous Status, Level 3 Accreditation and hosting Centers of Excellence and Development in four fields of expertise.

Assumptionistas: Today's young women of excellence

OVER THE years, Assumption College (AC) has produced women of character and leadership. Today, the students continue to give pride to the institution through different activities and recognition garnered from different universities and organizations. Ms. Jhoanna Mae Bautista, third year BS Nursing, was one of the students honored in the Black of the Philippine Month (BP) Ten Outstanding Expat Pinoy Children Awards, an annual search for ten young men and women who give tribute to their parents through their achievements in the academics and other fields. She was given the Bang Kalusog Community Award. Media Production majors Pit Salgado, Paola Ureta, and Kaiser Cabredong represented Assumption College and were included in the top 10 finalists in this year's nationwide contest by the National Association of Broadcasters Student Digital Media Festival. The finalists' video ad/promo campaign spearheaded by the NDSF 139 Joint Programmes which aims to improve and sustain access to safe and clean water for all Filipinos. Assumption also has a 100% passing rate in the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). All of the 2006 AC Education graduates, before the college and graduate school level, passed the licensure examination for teachers. Assumption builds and develops future women leaders through a tradition of academic excellence, character and faith formation, and social responsibility.

8th UST Christmas Concert Gala

THE 8TH UST Christmas Concert Gala of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) will be held Dec. 21 (Monday) 10 p.m. on Dinaw-Dia, and Dec. 23 (Friday) 10 p.m. on Studio 23. The concert gala that had its grand staging last Dec. 2, 6:30 p.m., at the Santissimo Rosario Parish ushered in the Yuletide season, and had a stellar cast of Thomasian musical-gems each the 2018 Choir of the World (UST Singers, the UST Symphony Orchestra, the UST Bossa Ensemble, soprano Rachelle Bondoc, and pianist Raul Sunico, president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines and dean of the UST Conservatory of Music. The chairpersons of the Gala are Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, O.P., executive director for UST Student-Centered Activities and Highlights, and Marlene C. Zobel, art patroness. The university was also featured in Dawit Tinig concerts in ANC last Dec. 14 (Saturday) 6:30 p.m. The feature titled "The University of Santo Tomas: Treasures of a Campus," was also in line with the 400th anniversary celebration of the university.

ADAMSON CONFERS DOCTORATE ON BRO. MICHAEL

Adamson University conferred the degree of Doctor of Humanities, Honoris Causa, on Bro. Michael Dm. Dave Dang last Dec. 5 at the Adamson University Theater. University president Fr. Gregorio L. Bañiqued Jr., C.M. conferred the award with the assistance of university registrar Prof. Alejandra Divas and Dr. Jose Ramon Villa-Rojas, dean of the Graduate School. The honoree, who hails from Singapore, is the 11th president general of the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP), one of the oldest and largest Catholic lay organizations in the world today, founded by Blessed Frederic Ozanam in Paris, France in 1833. He is the first non-European and Asian to ever hold the position in the society's 177-year history. While serving a total of seven (7) years as president general of the International Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP), he has traveled extensively to 153 countries and territories to visit the Society's Council General International, Bro. Michael has widely contributed to the building countless individual establishment projects in disaster-stricken areas, some of which benefitted a thousand families displaced by devastating typhoons in the Philippines.

CHRISTMAS CAROL FESTIVAL AT PERPETUAL

Grade six-level University of Perpetual Help System DALTA-Cabuyao Las Piñas City Campus performs a Christmas Carol during the 'Christmas Carol Festival' held at UPHS Football Field recently. Over thousands of guests watched and witnessed the show.

DON BOSCO, HAUS MOTORS PARTNERSHIP

The 'Building Bikes, Building Lives' project is a scholarship between Haus Motors and the Don Bosco Youth and Training Center in Cebu City. Haus Motors, co-founded by Germany-born Klaus Wolfram, donates its Luzon Distribution Inc.), Yamaha (Yamaha Motor Philippines Inc.), Honda (Honda Cars Philippines Inc.) and Kawasaki (BRCC), has come up with a facility that will train out-of-school youths on the basics of motorcycle repair and maintenance. Don Bosco Youth-Oratory Foundation Inc. (DBYOFI) is the implementing partner of the project. Students will undergo the 6-month course, which aims to advance the knowledge of students on motorcycles apart from automotive mechanical training, by the specific purpose of increasing their chances of finding regular employment. Participants of the program are provided with valuable skills that can be used to develop or repair, while others learn from instilling a sense of purpose and pride in work. Graduates through a service income (each bike completed) as well as an ownership commission when the units are sold to Haus Motor dealers. Qualified graduates of the course also get the chance to be hired by dealers of Haus Motors. For more details call Kawasaki Distributors Inc. at 743-3888 or visit www.kawasakicebu.com

Books worth your while

HOLIDAYS ARE the best time to catch up on your reading. Here are some books worth your while.

The Upside of Irrationality

In his first book, "Predictably Irrational," psychologist Dan Ariely of Duke University discusses the many unwise choices that lead most of us astray—in work, relationships, and life in general.

His second book, "The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic at Work and at Home" (2010; HarperCollins), is even more compelling. We all make irrational decisions, with negative effects, but surprisingly, sometimes they can be positive in the long run.

"Irrational decisions allow us to be adept in new environments, treat other people, enjoy relationships, and love and live well in a social structure."

Ariely uses data from real-life experiments to explain human behavior. In this eye-opening book, we learn why big bonuses don't always work, when playing with larger stakes can cause enjoying our jobs, and why we overestimate the value of what we make. What makes us seek justice? Why do we get used to things, even those we initially dislike? Why are we more likely to help one person but not many? And, when choosing a partner, do we seek, settle, or adapt?

Raising Happiness

Happiness, it turns out, can be learned. At least that's what science increasingly reveals, and Christine Carter should know. Carter is the executive director of the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California Berkeley, "an interdisciplinary research center that translates the study of happiness, compassion, and altruism for the public."

Using data from psychology, sociology, and neuroscience, the researchers in the center study meditation, gratitude, optimism, hope, discipline, and a host of other traits that are linked to happiness.

A mother of two daughters, Carter lists the most pertinent findings in each of the seven sections in her book entitled "Raising Happiness: 10 Simple Steps for More Joyful Kids and Happier Parents" (2010; Ballantine Books).

Here are parents help their children change your habits now, to good ones? In learning, why the mother and instructor know more than perfection? How should kids be praised...and why is the wrong sort of praise often harmful? How can children be motivated to do routine tasks willingly? What factors make kids kind, loving, and compassionate? And why it's wrong to put her together as a family so important?

You're Not the Boss of Me

How can parents avoid raising brats? The world is filled with temptations and distractions, and often it is too easy to give in to children's demands. Many parents today want to be popular with their kids, and giving them what they want seems the simplest way to do so.

But not if we want to raise respectful, truthful, self-reliant, and responsible kids, says American child development and behavior specialist Betsy Hoover. Hoover, in "You're Not the Boss of Me: How Providing Your 4- to 12-Year-Old Child" (2010; Harper), Boxes gives guidelines for parents in various challenging situations.

How can parents make their kids listen? How can children be encouraged to become responsible? What can parents do when their kids lie all the time? And, oh yes, how can kids learn respect?

Here is Boxes's three line of advice:

"You are not your child's friend," Boxes says. "Your child has enough friends. You are his parent. Being a parent sometimes means being disliked (even hated). Your child may not like you, but you prepare you because you made the hard call and you followed through. Parents who have a tendency in the face of 'You are the meanest Mom in the whole world' as the cues on when children know they have really 'Pre prepare who holds away from the obvious first-scoring or disrespect, educators to never talk low child out of misbehavior or who chooses not to impose the threatened consequence is not responsible for child." She it is wrong."

Mama Mary and Her Children

For people who have stopped believing in miracles, the latest book by media icon Fr. James Reuter, S.J., may help them regain their faith. "Mama Mary and Her Children" was a best-seller a couple of years ago. Now, another compilation, "Book Two: True Stories of Real People" (2010; Anvil Publishing), compiled by Ma. Ramona Ana Marie and Thelly Catena Aquino, is fast becoming one, too.

More than 40 contributors (full disclosure: I was one of them) have written about how the Mary affected—and continues to influence—their lives. Most of the stories revolve around physical healing (from cancer, polio, lupus, hemorrhoids, infertility, rest, autism, gangrene, heart problems, mental disturbances), but some are about more downright miraculous things. Many healings in a room, Mama Mary appears in the guise of a doctor who prevents an abortion, Mama Mary appears in the clouds, Mama Mary stops a bullet as it does not hit anyone.

Some stories are less dramatic, but no less effective. Lonely ladies, who pray to Mama Mary and her husband St. Joseph, find loving spouses soon after. Desperate entrepreneurs who turn to Our Lady get their businesses jumpstarted.

For me, Mama Mary is the embodiment of all peace. I find Mama Mary's love in 13 journey with Mama's beginning who says, "I was sitting with my wife on the embankment of the Pasig River facing the green at Luneta, waiting for the candlelight procession. Then it came upon [a—a feeling of intellable peace. I had no idea what it was or where it whatsoever. It was my first moment of heaven on earth."

Have a blessed Christmas!

All books are available in National Book Store and Power books branches.

Ariel is the author at www.booksbyariel.com.

PHIL TEAM WINS AWARD AT ASIAN COMPETITION
A team from MV Technological Institute (MVT) won Best of the Nation Award for the recent 8th WorldSkills Asian competition in Thailand. Lee Melvin Bautista (second from left) and Reiner Adriane Tamayo (third from left) trained for only two weeks with competition sponsor China Yalong Science and Technology Group Ltd. They received their awards from MVT-Technical student Agot Cabriga participated in the electrical installations technology. Others in photo are team manager-instructor Rosalinda Dacuycuy (left) and MVT education group director Charles M. Valencia (right).

Seminar on best practices in human resource policies, contracts held Jan. 13-14

THE CENTER for Global Best Practices (CGBP) will hold a special HRCLI-accredited seminar on "Best Practices in Drafting HR Policies and Contracts" Jan. 13-14 at the Lilac Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

The two-day solutions-oriented program is designed to help business owners, HR practitioners, decision-makers, lawyers, and lawyers craft a working HR policy, code of conduct, and employment contract.

Other best practices to be discussed include those relating to independent labor contracting and outsourcing, union and collective bargaining agreement issues, and recent Supreme Court rulings, particularly those involving dismissal and disciplinary actions.

Lectures and also be given on contract provisions and agreements, proper drafting/formulation of memoranda of agreement, special templates to simplify preparation of HR contracts, proper enforcement of HR policies, proper way to terminate employees, and other things HR practitioners need to know, as well as tips on proper handling of personnel.

Featured speakers are lawyers Emerico de Guzman, senior partner and head of labor and employment, Angara Abello Concepcion Regala and Cruz Law Offices (ACCRALAW) and principal author of the 2008 book "Philippine Chapter of the Guide to International Labor and Employment Law"; Josefito G. Diaz, CPA, senior managing partner of DiazBalitaan tax firm and author of two books on Philippine taxes; and Bienvenido E. Laguesma, former labor secretary and founder and senior partner of Laguesma Magsalin Consulta and Gastardo Law Offices, and Ramon de Leon, former managing director of the Asian Corporation who has worked in various key Asian countries' subsidiaries like Globe Telecom, Manila Water Company, 3M and BPI Family Bank.

Early-bird and group discounts are available. As seats are limited, advance registration is required. Visit the Center for Global Best Practices web site at www.cgbp.org or call (632) 7118768 or 09189888888, e-mail jennyvale@cgbp.org.

The program is accredited by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines. Lawyers will get HELP credits.

Company has drive for education

FOR MORE than 60 years now, Victory Liner has built a reputation for helping Filipinos reach their destinations. As one of the largest transportation companies in the country, Victory Liner has played a critical role in introducing Filipinos to north Luzon.

But Victory Liner knows a company is only as good as its employees so, since 1967, it has sought to show appreciation to its staff through college scholarships for their children.

Scholarships are granted through Doña Maria T. Fernandez Foundation Inc., the foundation began in 1967, more than 5,000 students had been able to pursue higher education. Among the beneficiaries are Linda Bago, Abigail Reyes and Jim Tendaal.

Reyes' mother, a long-time Victory Liner employee, applied for a scholarship for her daughter who was a BS MARINE student of the University of the Philippines-Diliman.

Reyes, who got the scholarship based on her academic performance and her parent's record in the company, says the grant helped ease the family's financial burden.

She adds that, under the program, there are no restrictions on what courses students can pursue. The only requirement is for scholars to maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) per semester.

The scholarship she does not require students to work for Victory Liner after graduation. Reyes says the foundation simply wants to help students finish college and get better opportunities, but the company did help Reyes land her first job as a product development officer overseer from department at allied Bank.

Bago, a graduate of BS Business Administration, major in computer science, of Central Colleges of the Philippines, got the scholarship because her father worked for Victory Liner. After graduation, she joined the company as an encoder. Having visited her father often, even performing in company events, she already knew her co-workers very well before her first day of employment.

Bago says the great thing about working for Victory is the way they treat the staff, treating employees like family. Thus, she immediately felt at ease on her first day at work.

After a year, she decided to expand her horizon. She left with the company's blessings. Like a parent, Victory Liner believed Bago could learn more outside the company and be able to contribute significantly to society.

Bago is now an officer in the Credit Risk department of Union Bank.

But she does not forget that it was the Victory Liner scholarship that allowed her to get a college degree, saying it was a privilege. The skills she learned while working at Victory Liner, especially people skills.

Trinidad is a fourth year Hotel and Restaurant Management student at Bulacan State University. He is the second person in his family to receive a scholarship from Victory Liner; his elder sister also received a grant. After finishing her course, she is now working for a business process outsourcing company.

The subsidy was a great help to Trinidad, whose father has been with Victory Liner for 21 years now. The scholarship's GPA requirement motivates him to be conscientious in his studies.

Saying the scholarship is a privilege, Trinidad says he will not waste the opportunity and will study hard.

GM PHE wings of Victory (from left) Bago, Reyes and Trinidad

Once upon a legend

From page M1

his mother in the mid- to the Cherokees are forced to leave their home and walk the long ways to the West.

By using the newspaper, the teachers were able to relate the story to real-life events. Talking about the deaths in the journey of Little Bluff, for example, led them to talking not only about death in the families of the children but also the reports on the Maguindanao massacre. The wrenching up of the Cherokee people to reservation camps was related to the relocation of urban settlers or "squatters" to government-designated settlements.

This year, there were more public schools outside Metro Manila than last year, represented by teachers Brenda B. Gadit and Marlyn B. Soto, of Balintay Elementary School; Elena S. Bascon of Cabog-Cabog Elementary School; Melinda A. Mendiola of Cupang Elementary School (all in Balanga, Bataan); Eva Imogen of Stella E. Bonus Elementary School (Olongapo); Diana Hope D. Pollicar and Winifred G. Advincula of Gen. P.F. Espiritu Elementary School (Bacoor, Cavite); Caroline S. Andres and Justin A. Agustin of Caballero Elementary School (Lucena, Quezon Province); and Rosalina C. Dimaculangan of Soldiers Hills IV Elementary School (Biñan, Cavite).

The students in Metro Manila included Mary Rose G. Delgado of Col. E. de Leon Elementary School (Valenzuela); Gemma Ruth E. Galbadon of Ben Cab Elementary School (Pasay City); Magnolia Schespace of Espiritu Santo Parochial School (Manila); Mary Grishon of Bonifacio Laguda Elementary School (Malabon); Aida E. Aguirre and Jennifer Montero of Jose Magsaysay Elementary School (Makati); Ryan Lorenzo Singson of Tuloy sa Don Bosco Elementary School in Alabang (Muntinlupa); Leonardo A. Manalo, Rema B. Lavendia and Dolores L. Villanueva of Sampaloc 1, Pateo Elementary School (Makati).

The teachers all agreed the stories met their teaching needs and expectations. "The lessons I saw students, which they did after reading each chapter of the story, are the products of their imagination, and creativity. The activities reinforced the lessons in the language plans of the English subject," said one teacher.

According to the teachers, the activity guides for the stories were easy to implement and the students were enthusiastic. They would see the story and activity guides again, said the teachers, for a different class, given the chance, and would recommend it for the Read Reading Program to other teachers.

To be included in the program, these teachers had to attend the Learning with the Inquirer Workshop after the series they had to participate in a debriefing to help the section editor evaluate the extent the students used the newspaper in the classroom.

It did not daunt the teachers, but the story had to misdemeanor. Their students were enthusiastic about what would happen next, they observed. They all would like to be part of another EI series next year.

Undergrads can train as flight attendants

THE GOLDEN Seasons Flight Training Center (GSFTC) accepts undergraduates who want to train as flight attendants.

Alma Cortez Cotoner, training director, says applicants should have good communication skills, at least 5'3" in height, and with good complexion.

She says, with proper training and skills management, undergraduates can aspire for well-paid jobs in the aviation industry.

A recent graduate, Perlina Candelaria Montoya, is now training with Royal Brunei Airlines.

Capt. Boyet Bautista, director of flight operations of Freedom Worldwide Airways and former Cebu Airlines captain, and Jeff Bonoyoan, director of La Salle's College of International Hospitality Management, were the special guests at the recent graduation of Golden Seasons flight attendants.

Cotoner, a former international flight attendant of Philippine Airlines, says Golden Seasons training includes personality development, aircraft familiarization, emergency procedures, customer and social service and BLS/CPR survival swimming.

Call 7937682 local 205 or 09179037302.

GSFTC trio: Bautista, Cotoner, GSFTC graduates Carla Rose Gaddis, and Bonoyoan

CBA students top marketing contest

STUDENTS of the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration topped the recent 11th Philippine Association of National Advertisers Philippine Integrated Marketing Communications competition.

The CBA team was composed of Aimee Lota Bacalzo, Engelbert Chua, Kristine Fee, Adrian Mandigo, Michelle Mateo, Ran Quebec and Ma. Cecilia Tan, advised and CBA undergraduate program director and Prof. James Peter Jonas.

The team received a trophy, individual medals and P50,000 in cash. This year's competition had the theme "Life in the Line: A Health and Wellness Campaign for the Youth."

The CBA team entered the "Supermarkets" campaign with three components—Super Night, Super Team and Super Diet.

LEGEND OF THE PINTY AND THE TEARS

JOSE Magsaysay Mercado I. Sakol., and Basilio Legarda Elementary Schools

What they've learned

TEN SERIES "Legend of a Pony's Years" was the first story in the Batch-OE Series' Reading Program that had human characters. In previous years, the students met new creatures and insects in the sentilized lessons. As one teacher put it, "the story gave us a lot of material for coaching about human values."

Tired of all these buzzword about a fairy, boy and a little pony who were "kindred spirits" and

CHILDREN wrote letters to Little Pony and did artwork of what they read.

CLOCKWISE from above: Nellie E. Rivera, Galvanton (Kinton in pink and blue), Legarda and Em. P.F.Aguirre

young readers to a combination of legend and traditional story telling. The student activity guide required them to look up a Filipino legend about how the world began.

Some of the English teachers caught in tandem with science teachers, who took the opportunity to teach about biodiversity and the environment. The children were asked to research about each animal that they met in every chapter—the land eagle, the tarsier, the loris, the bat, the ants—as well as about medicinal plants, seafood, carnivorous and sensitive elements.

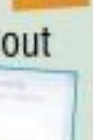
Although some of the students had seen them in the movies, this was their first time to read a story about Native Americans. And so they learned about the Cherokee culture, how shamans figured in the culture, about the food the men ate, about the role of the uncle when the father died in a family.

They learned about how a boy dealt with grief over his father's death by going on long walks up the mountains until a wise old woman told him, "Your mother's grieving, too. You must be a comfort to her, not a burden."

In the story Little Wolf and his people were forcibly removed from their homes and made to travel west to Oklahoma. The students were asked to relate the Cherokees' experience to historical stories about people who were being displaced from their homes.

From the anger and bitterness of an old packhorse, the students learned about the cruel things people do to animals. The students were asked to write about what they could say to the packhorse to change its mind about humans.

Language skills were reinforced by lessons on making predictions based on clues/danger makings and newspaper headlines, as well as lessons on stories like, for instance, stories ("My best friend is Claire. She is like a book. She teaches me what I know. Every time I don't have assignment, she gives me the question and the answers. She is an important person in my life.")



Letter from Laoag

DEAR BENCH,

Every teacher earnestly desires to maximize learning possibilities for learners.

This is what I have in my heart, as a teacher. I search for the best for my learners. You are one of the few I have given my pupils. Thank you for being a part of our learning experiences. This is incomparable because not everybody gets this chance.

The newspapers is a favorite medium for me and because it is the one for me. I personally buy a copy for the school library, of which I am in charge. This is how I came across the mailing program you sponsored. I quickly made the decision to sign up after reading it. I was hopeful my school would be chosen. I did not stop until I got an answer from Marissa Chotis, with the conviction that I should attend the workshop. I did not worry about the distance from Laoag City to Makati and how to get to the business office. It's the opportunities or avail of the program for my school led me there. I did not tell my principal that I was going to the business. I was supposed to have my checkup at St. Luke's Medical Center/ anyway. I rescheduled my hospital visit so I could attend the workshop. I was so thankful our school was chosen.

It was only upon my return that I told my principal the good news. My pupils were so excited when the first issue arrived. I saw in their eyes the joy of having a newspaper of their own. Every chapter was something to look forward to. The story became a story of the town where pupils. They shared their feelings for each characters and the whole tale. Little Wolf became their idol. How they hated the old packhorse!

It was a challenge for me and my partner teacher to keep them interested, as the story was not pure of romance. But I am so grateful for the chance given to us to learn about another culture. We learned with the students.

Personally, I want to thank you for helping me realize one of my goals as a teacher, to provide a unique way of learning—due to using the newspaper. Aside from the story, I used the newspapers, being the school paper advisor, in training our campus journalists because P25/per copy of the Inquirer is so much for us public school teachers. Thank you for that, too.

No words can describe my gratitude for all this. How I wish we can avail again of the program next year! This kind of program supplements the traditional books with richer and unlimited learning experiences from other sources.

Thank you for being a partner. May you continue with this program. More power!

Caroline S. Andres
English teacher, Grade 6
Gabaldon Elementary School
Laoag City, Ilocos Norte

What the partner teachers say about the series and the program

TEACHERS said the story helped them reach values.

"THERE is a dearth of available reading material in my school. Sometimes, I have to write the story on manila paper. But, with the free newspaper, the story was there for the students to read.

• Bench-fit. Solid reading should be a yearlong program.

• I have more activities for you so we can replace our ready-made lesson plans for reading with the series.

• The story was interesting because of the relationship between a boy and an animal that treated each other as brothers.

• The story itself is genre is realistic fiction.

• The story is very interesting not only for the kids but for adults as well. Why you continue this project in the years to come.

• It was more helpful to me as a teacher because it provided lots of activities in developing the various reading skills of pupils. The children were exposed to other cultures.

• The stories in each chapter were long. There were difficult words in the first chapters. But the lessons became interesting. Thanks a lot for the opportunity given to us teachers and our pupils.

• My pupils learned to love reading because of the interesting type of story. Everything in the progress has worth.

• The activities in the activity guide were very helpful and easy to understand. Pupils learned on their own and had fun and excitement.

• It helped us come up with more good materials for teaching and motivating my students. The story was the best reason for their helped me.

• The story was good and it was a big help to the students. The values in the story were very well introduced in the stories.

• Pupils became aware of the story of another culture. They were able to relate to the plight of Little Wolf, who was sad but found a friend in a horse.

• The story itself was helpful because the pupils were really engrossed.

• The story which served as the reference material for us to be used in our lesson, was more helpful. We were able to use the story in future lessons, especially the love and respect for parents.

• The side stories and information about environment and animals were good. How I teach science.

• The Newspaper Connection of the program was more helpful. It was an additional activity that allowed for creativity.

• I used the newspaper in another subject matter in English ... "very good activities using the newspaper."

• My pupils were all excited to read the newspaper. And not only the learning section but the whole newspaper. They learned a lot .. from the student activity guide. They'd love to read new words for previous.

• It would be much better if all of my English classes receive the free newspaper because all items from it are useful since I'm also teaching science.

• It would be nice if the newspapers will still be delivered, even just a few copies.

"CLASS 2015". Partner teachers pose for a class picture with the INQUIRER Learning editor and marketing team after the workshop.